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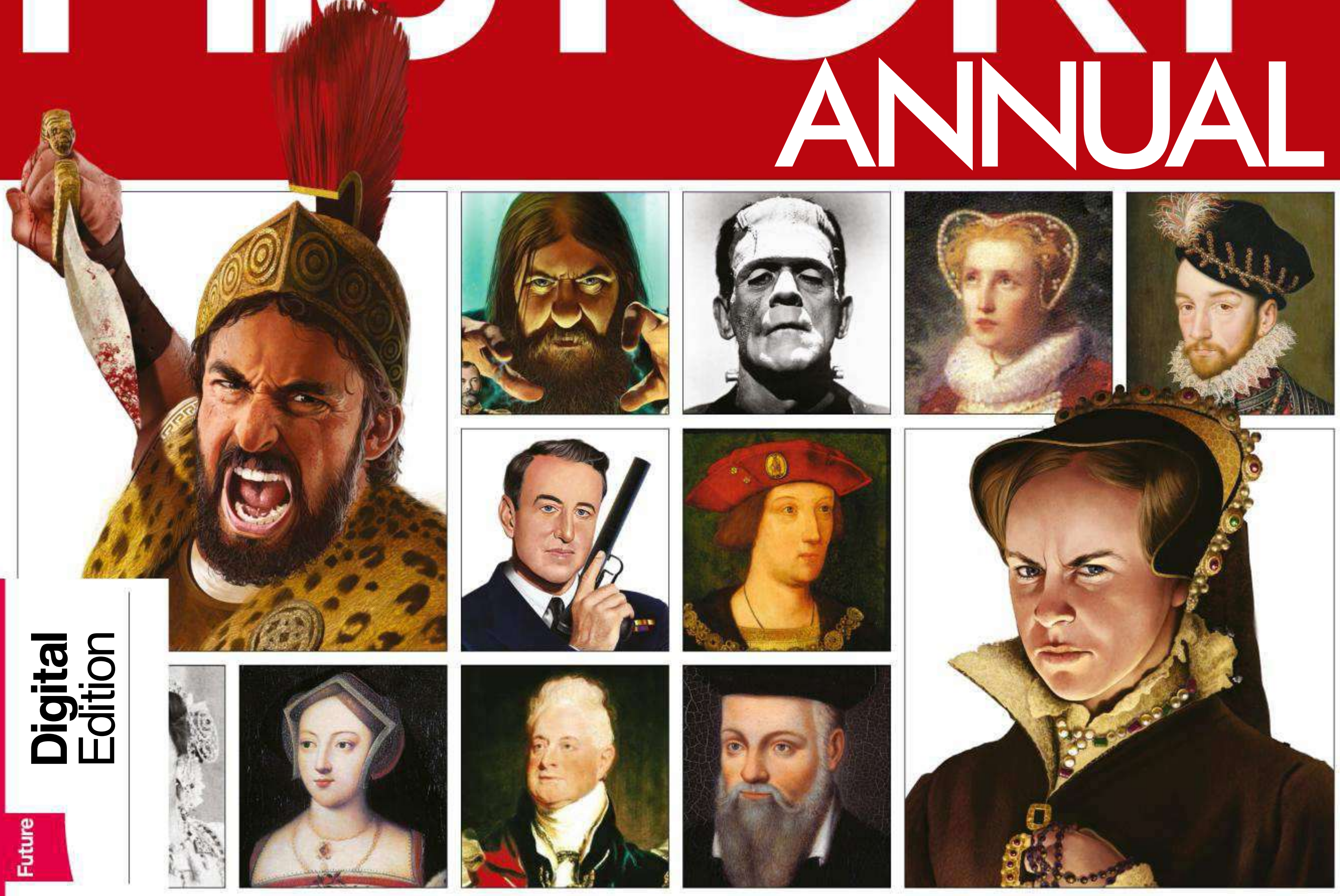

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ALL ABOUT HISTORY ANNUAL

Retelling the true stories behind history's most memorable events, the All About History Annual will transport you back in time. Discover the bloodthirstiness of the tyrannical Vlad the Impaler, ponder the origins of the ancient city of Petra and take a look at the strange ways Victorians dealt with their mortality. Grasp the impact and legacy of monarchs like Cleopatra, Bloody Mary and Louis XIV. Uncover the bizarre rituals and cults of Ancient Rome, follow an account of Hannibal Barca's quest for vengeance and reveal the origins of the world's greatest sporting event: the Olympic Games. Then, for some light relief, we lift the lid on the machinations of the various secret service agencies, from the CIA to the KGB. This collection gathers together all the best content from the magazine over the past year, so sit back and immerse yourself in the highlights and low points of our tumultuous past.

ALL ABOUT HISTORY ANNUAL

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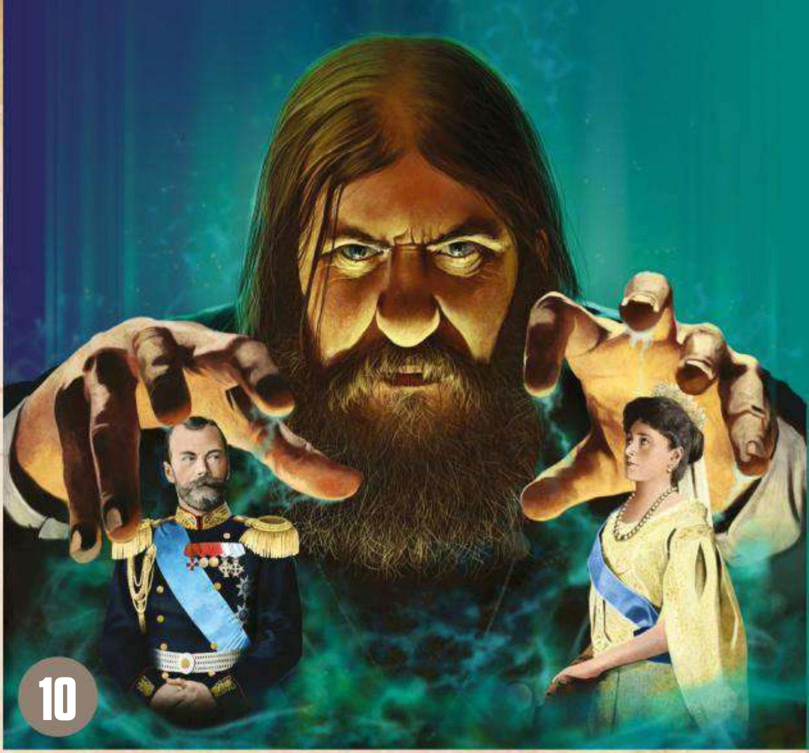

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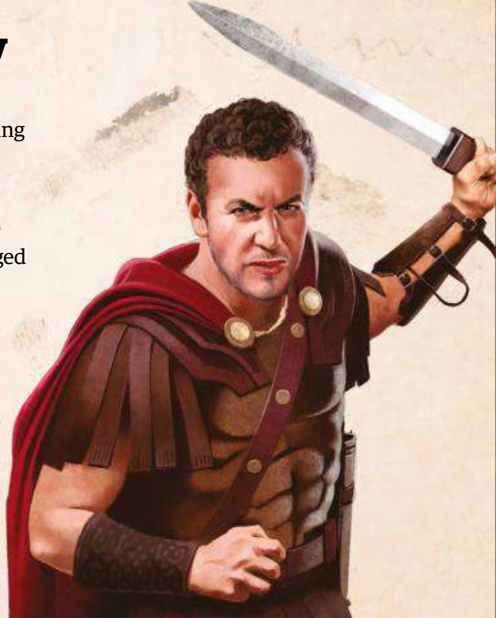

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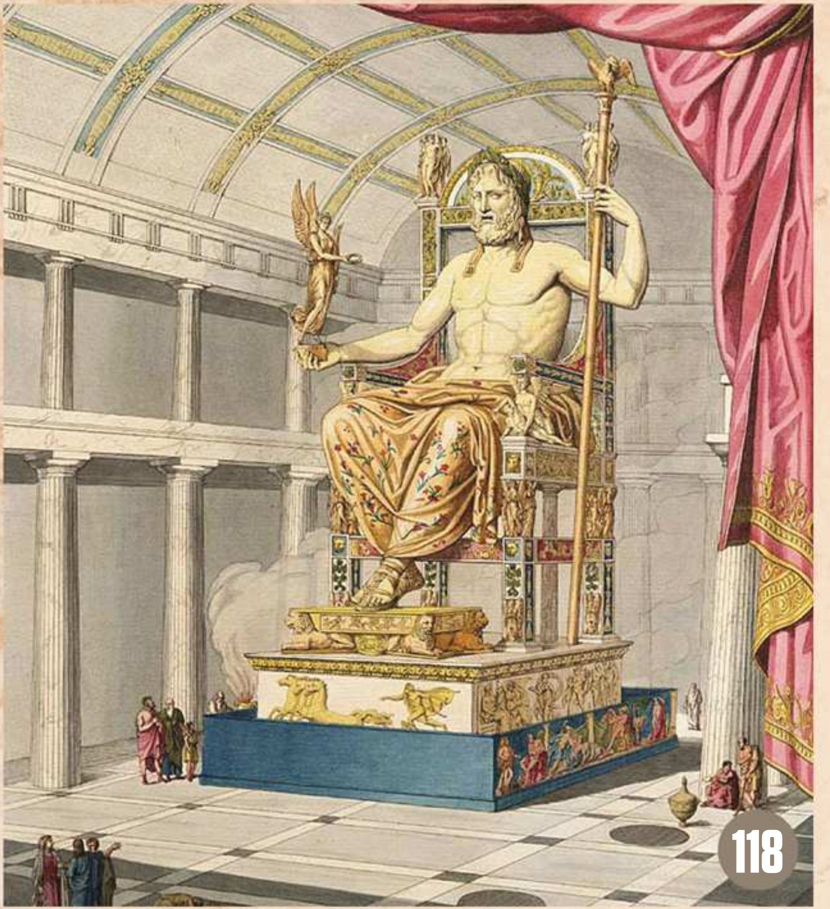

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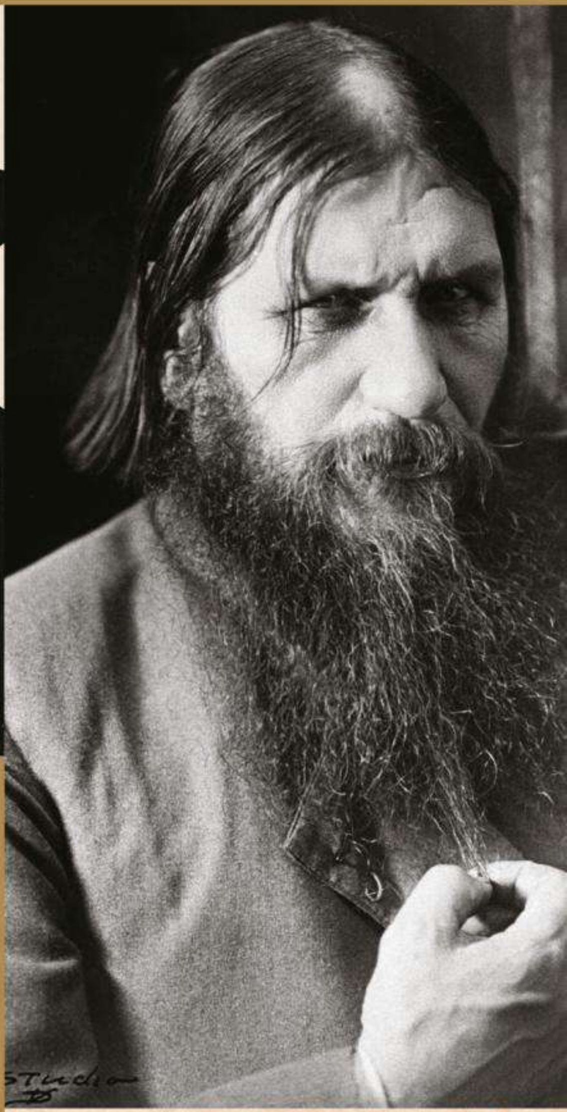

THE OCCULT

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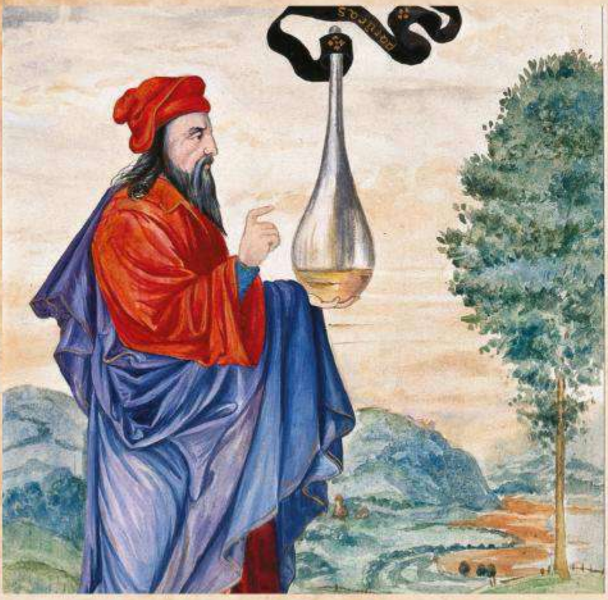
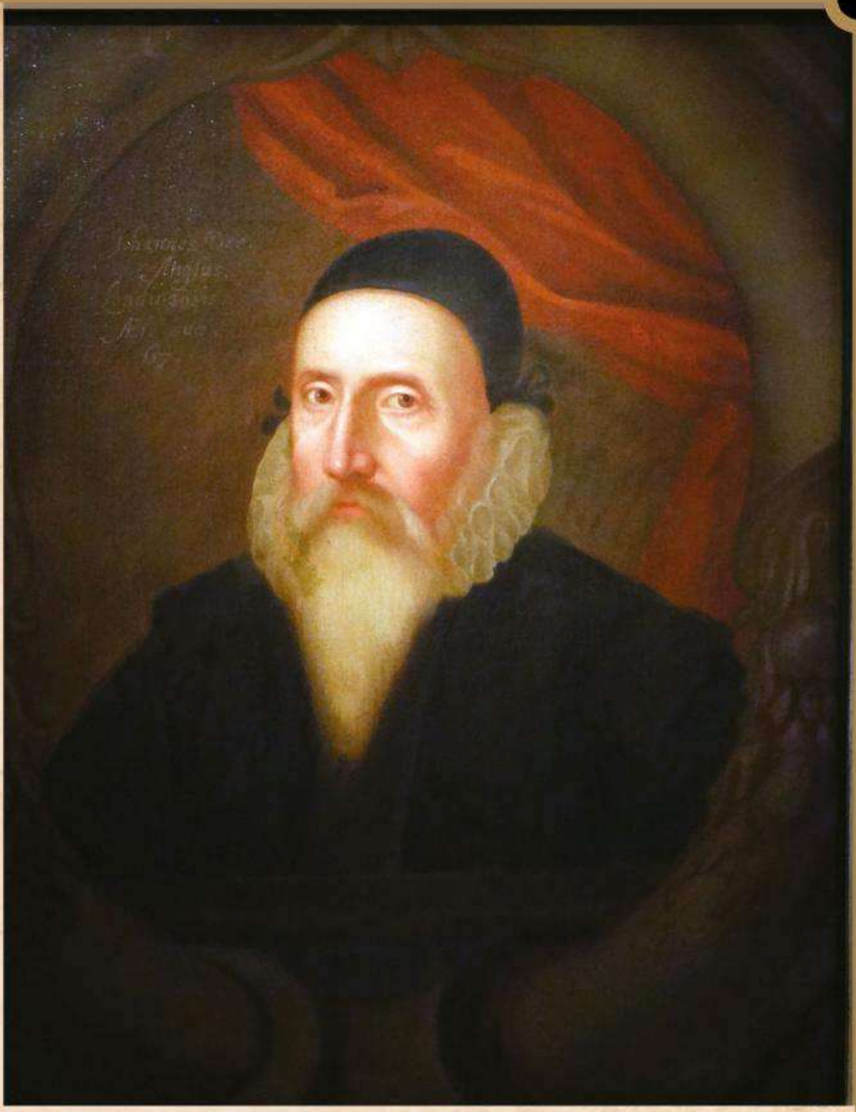




INSIDE THE TWISTED MIND OF RUSSIA'S 'MAD MONK'

RASPUTIN

- How he gained the trust of Russian royalty
- Uncover his role in the fall of a dynasty
- The gruesome murder

For a great deal of time in Russia it was believed that the name Rasputin meant 'licentious', and it was this image of the man that became the most prevalent. Rasputin was an accused sexual deviant, a rapist, and 'Mad Monk' who played the Russian royals like keys on a piano and whispered dark urges into the tsarina's ear. Rasputin, however, does not mean licentious at all. Its meaning is closer to, 'Where two rivers meet', referring to the place where he was born.

Just like his name, the true Rasputin, the man who lived and breathed, has been lost to history and replaced with caricatures; an old man with a long scraggly beard, terrible teeth and even more terrible deeds - but also a doting father, a respected holy man and a lover of beauty. It is this duality that has confounded and caused debates to this day. Was he indeed the man who brought a Russian dynasty to its knees, or has history created a scapegoat out of a man who only ever acted with good intentions?

The village of Pokrovskoye was small even by Siberian standards. It was more like a remote scattering of houses in the wide expanse of the West Siberian plains. With only 200 dwellings and no more than a thousand residents, it was an incredibly isolated start for the man whom every citizen of Russia would come to know, fear and loathe. But it was in this quiet, sleepy peasant village that Grigori Rasputin was born. The fifth of nine children, from a very early age Rasputin did not fit in. He did not attend school, for there was no school for him to attend, and he soon fell into a life of debauchery and drunkenness. The peasants of the close-knit village did not trust the strange boy, and he was an outsider even in his place of birth. He found the backbreaking labour of peasant work boring and empty, and he stole horses, fences - anything to add colour to his dull existence.

Rasputin was not a fool; he did not live a life of crime due to incompetence, but instead because of a feeling that his life was lacking something. He had a wife, he even had children, but he still felt a gaping emptiness. Now in his twenties, he found himself, either through divine providence or banishment, at the newly expanded Verkhoturye Monastery. It was there that he met Starets Makary, an elder who lived a humble existence in the woods near the monastery. Rasputin's interactions with this holy man slowly transformed the rebel youth into a deeply spiritual individual. Rasputin gave up alcohol, tobacco and meat. When he returned to Pokrovskoye the rebellious criminal had become a fervent religious convert.

Rasputin had been inspired by Makary but not by the monastery. Not only did he accuse the place of practising a "vice" which was likely homosexuality, but he also later proclaimed that the monastic life was not for him, saying, "One finds violence over people there." He believed that

> "THE TRUE RASPUTIN, THE MAN WHO LIVED AND BREATHED, HAS BEEN LOST TO HISTORY AND REPLACED WITH CARICATURES"

People from all walks of life seemed to be drawn to Rasputin; he is seen here surrounded by admirers

FAITH OR FAKE?

Alexandra believed Rasputin cured her son with faith-healing, but it's one of many explanations

The wrong drugs

Aspirin was in use at the time and it is likely it was administered to the heir to help reduce his pain. Rasputin may have rejected the use of this drug, and by doing so unintentionally helped the boy, as aspirin thins the blood and would have worsened Alexei's condition.

Calming presence

As a holy man it is not out of the question to assume that Rasputin brought a calm, tranquil air to both Alexandra and her son. This reduced stress may have helped the bleeding to gradually slow and stop.

Drugging

A popular theory at the time was that Rasputin was drugging Alexei with Tibetan herbs. This theory was fuelled by the disconnect people felt towards the imperial family.

Good timing

Others believed Rasputin to be less occult and more cunning. It was argued that he had a confidant at the court, a lady-in-waiting, who fed him information about Alexei, and when the boy was on the mend the healer made an appearance to claim the credit.

Hypnosis

The court physician at the time, Botkin, fiercely disliked Rasputin and claimed he had used hypnosis on the child, whispering words into his ear and inducing the bleeding to stop.

only by venturing across the world could he truly become closer to God and salvation. Throughout his whole life, Rasputin had never been one to sit idly, and he was definitely not accustomed to bowing to authority and blindly following orders, so it is not surprising he was repulsed by a life of servitude in a cold stone building. Rasputin, after all, did not belong in small places, or behind locked doors. His ever-wandering heart wished to explore the vastness of the Earth, and that's exactly what he set about doing.

Rasputin packed few belongings, wished his family goodbye and began the life of a strannik, or mystic wanderer. We do not know the extent or length of Rasputin's various pilgrimages in this stage of his life, but it is possible that he travelled as far as Mount Athos, the centre of the Orthodox Church. Sometimes he did not come back home for years, and his own wife and children struggled to recognise the man that returned. However, even in this life of a strannik Rasputin began to carve his own path. He disliked abiding by the accepted norms, preferring to do things his own way. For example, he would refuse to wear the traditional fetters and instead wore the same shirt for an entire year. He was rebellious and headstrong, but he was also thoughtful, independent and astonishingly open-minded for a peasant from a tiny village.

During these years of wandering Rasputin encountered many different kinds of people from all branches of the Russian social order. He developed strong opinions but also discovered and refined his ability to read people. Many have commented in memoirs and elsewhere that what Rasputin possessed was a very unique magnetism. He had a talent for understanding people quickly, he knew exactly what to say to them and he was unlike any priest or holy man they had encountered. This is because it was the truth – Rasputin was different, he had not confined himself to books and monasteries, but to the real world, and real people. When he spoke about God it was with a meaning that normal people could understand and his own beliefs were strengthened not simply with study, but with vivid, electric and very real experiences.

This 'magnetism' began to draw people to Rasputin's home. Villagers and pilgrims further afield travelled to sit, talk, pray and seek council from the man. He soon amassed a loyal group of followers who would meet regularly to read from the *Bible* and sing religious songs in a secret chapel – a cave beneath the stables created by Rasputin himself. However, as these meetings grew in popularity, Rasputin also attracted negative attention. Rumours quickly spread that he was often seen with young women, that his followers would bathe him, and that he was teaching them mysterious rituals.

Rasputin was especially despised by the resident priest of Pokrovskoye, who likely didn't relish the idea of an upstart peasant gaining such popularity over himself and his own teachings. Due to all this attention, Rasputin's meetings were abandoned and the priest probably thought that was the end of it, but little did he know Rasputin had only just begun to scratch the surface of the power and influence he held.

When Rasputin announced his intentions to travel to St Petersburg, he was warned by a fellow holy man that "the city will ruin you", but he ignored the warning; he had set his heart on a single mission, and nobody could dissuade him. Although Rasputin was a worldly man he was completely unprepared for the city and it could have easily swallowed him. Fortunately his work had not gone unnoticed and he bore a letter of recommendation that granted him access to Bishop Sergei, the rector of the St Petersburg Seminary. Through association with Sergei, Rasputin became known to the curious elite of St Petersburg and the counts and countesses were fascinated by the bedraggled travelling man with his soft, strong words and strange allure. Many of the aristocracy, painfully bored with their structured, weary lives, found his peculiar ways amusing, like wearing his hair long and the way he kissed women when first meeting them. The outsider was a curiosity, a talking point and almost a party piece.

> "THE OUTSIDER WAS A CURIOSITY… AND ALMOST A PARTY PIECE"

Soon the aristocracy were introducing him to their friends and the name Rasputin became known to anyone who was anyone in the capital. After befriending Princess Milica of Montenegro and her sister Anastasia, Rasputin was then introduced by them to the two most powerful figures in the whole of Russia - the tsar and the tsarina, Nicholas II and Alexandra. Rasputin had used his powerful words and enchanting nature to climb from the bottom rungs of Russian society to the very top.

Rasputin's arrival to the lives of the Imperial family could not have been better timed if he had planned it himself. Russia was in a state of disarray; they had lost a war against Japan in devastating fashion, humiliating the country on the world stage. The tsar also had to deal with the fallout after Bloody Sunday - where hundreds, if not thousands, of peaceful protestors were massacred by the Imperial Guard. Although Nicholas himself had not given the order to fire, for many it condemned the tsar, who they had, until the massacre, regarded as a 'father'. The Imperial family were facing a brutal backlash and there was a very real chance of them losing their grip on the country entirely. Rasputin sat and listened to

THE POWER OF THE MYSTIC

Historian Douglas Smith discusses the growing interest in the occult, and how this aided Rasputin's rise to power

Douglas Smith is an award-winning historian and translator. He is the author of five books on Russia, including, most recently, *Rasputin*. He lives in Seattle with his family. To learn more, visit www.douglassmith.info

Just how widespread was the Russian upper-class fascination with mysticism?

The turn of the century was a period of intense spiritual searching in Russia. During what became known as Russia's Silver Age, from roughly 1890 to 1914, the country's educated classes exhibited a fascination for mysticism and the occult and all manner of the supernatural, from table turning, hypnotism, and chiromancy, to Rosicrucianism, fortune-telling, telepathy, and Theosophy. Hypnotism was more popular in early 20th century Russia than in Western Europe and was a particularly common practice among St Petersburg psychiatrists. The best-known psychiatrist-hypnotist at the time was Vladimir Bekhterev, who used hypnosis widely as part of his science of 'psychoneurology.' The fascination for the occult became widespread, extending well beyond Russia's artists and intellectuals and reaching deeply into the middle classes.

How and why did this obsession with the occult grow among Russian aristocrats?

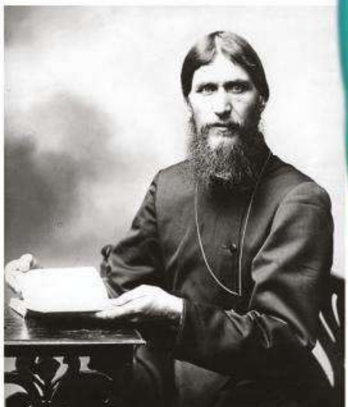
Most educated Russians began turning away from the materialist positivism of the 19th century and back to the church and other forms of spiritualism in what can be called a true religious renaissance. Many sought to revitalise what was widely perceived as a hidebound, bureaucratic, and spiritually dead official Russian Orthodox Church, to infuse it with a renewed sense of mystery, fervency, and life. Others rejected the church altogether for new forms of spiritual experience that held the promise of even more powerful encounters with the sacred.

Did this religious renaissance help Rasputin gain influence over the imperial family?

This religious renaissance is crucial to understanding the rise of Rasputin. On one hand, his biography reflects this moment in Russian history. He himself had some sort of profound religious experience in his late twenties and he left home in Siberia to become what the Russians call a strannik, a holy pilgrim. For years he wandered in rags and often in fetters across the empire to various holy places and holy men in search of spiritual enlightenment. This was his university, so to speak, and in time he became known for his profound knowledge of scripture and insights into Christian teachings and human nature. He was embraced in St Petersburg by lofty bishops and members of the Romanov family as a charismatic peasant holy man in whom burned the true unvarnished Orthodox faith. It was they who introduced Rasputin to Nicholas and Alexandra, thus opening his path to the throne.

Was Rasputin as much a mystic as the public perceived him to be or were his aims more political?

From the beginning of his relationship with Nicholas and Alexandra, Rasputin offered not only religious teachings, but political counsel as well. They first met during the Revolution of 1905, and Rasputin instructed the tsar to remain firm and not give in to the demands for political change. In the summer of 1914, Rasputin wrote a remarkable letter to Nicholas, begging him to ignore the voices of the warmongers and resist the temptation to go to war. In apocalyptic terms, Rasputin wrote he foresaw "ruin" and "grief without end." Nicholas, of course, did not heed this prophetic advice. In late 1916, not long before his murder, Rasputin pleaded with Nicholas to do something about the growing bread lines in the capital. He told the tsar the people were hungry and growing angry. Nothing, however, was done, and soon these same people would spark a revolt that would bring down the 300-year-old dynasty of the Romanovs.



In addition to religious counsel, Rasputin advised on political topics

Alexandra's worries and they spoke at length about religion. The holy man calmly told her that her husband needed to be closer to his people, and that she could trust his words. Alexandra immediately became close to Rasputin, as she too had a strong belief in the strength of the dynasty, and believed that he had been sent by God to secure the strength of their royal line.

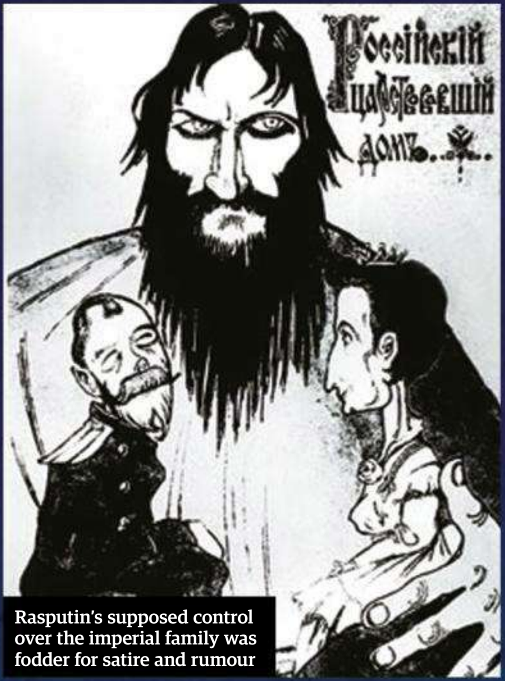
Alexandra's trust in Rasputin meant that when her son, Alexei, suffered from one of his haemophilic bleeding episodes, she summoned him immediately. The boy was the Imperial family's only male heir, and his mother adored and doted on him. Alexandra was well aware of the seriousness of his condition; she had lost an uncle and brother to the same hereditary disease, passed down from her grandmother, Queen Victoria, and it is likely she knew that it would claim her son, too. Alexei became a symbol of the future of Russian royalty - to save him was also to save tsardom. Alexandra had spoken to many doctors and tried multiple cures for her son's disease but nothing had worked, and so in her moment of need, with her child dangerously close to death, she called upon the mystic holy man.

> "ALEXEI BECAME A SYMBOL OF THE FUTURE OF RUSSIAN ROYALTY"

Rasputin came to the palace, began to pray by the boy's bed and amazingly, seemed to be able to calm the child, his condition rapidly improving. In another incident Alexei sustained an injury and lay suffering and moaning for days. Alexandra, remembering how Rasputin had managed to ease her child previously, sent a telegram to the man. Rasputin quickly responded to her worries; "The little one will not die. Do not allow the doctors to bother him too much." Just as he said, the boy's health went on to improve and Alexandra became convinced Rasputin was responsible for his recovery. Rasputin's place in the royal household was secured.

Although Rasputin's role was primarily as a healer to Alexei, he became a close confidant of the family, even occasionally serving as advisor to the tsar himself. For example, he warned Nicholas about entering World War I, urging him to make peace with Germany. Nicholas, of course, went along with the war anyway, which was a huge, costly mistake to the country and to his own reputation. However, Rasputin's easy access and apparent influence over the household did not go unnoticed. Living in an apartment on Gorokhovaya street, Rasputin was frequently visited by peasants seeking assistance, but even more so by the aristocracy, many of whom planned to use him to gain their own favour at court.

There were others, however, who were less than fond of the strange peasant. Malicious rumours concerning Rasputin began to resurge - that he seduced women with his charm, using his power



Rasputin's supposed control over the imperial family was fodder for satire and rumour

THE MEN WHO KILLED RASPUTIN

Pushed to the edge of desperation, these men formed a conspiracy to put an end to Rasputin once and for all

Felix Yusupov

Coming from an extremely wealthy family - richer than the Romanovs - Felix was the oldest surviving male heir to the huge fortune. Although he was clever and quick-witted, he faced criticism for avoiding service during World War I. As the husband of Alexander Romanov's niece, Princess Irina of Russia, he disliked the influence that Rasputin held over the family, and became a key player in the plot to bring about his downfall.

Grand Duke Dmitri Pavlovich

Dmitri was grandson of Alexander II of Russia and after his primary carer, his uncle, was killed by a revolutionary attack, he went to live with the Romanovs. He was known to be something of a playboy and these actions likely ruined plans for him to marry the eldest Romanov daughter, Olga. In his later life he moved to Paris and had an affair with Coco Chanel.

Vladimir Mitrofanovich Purishkevich

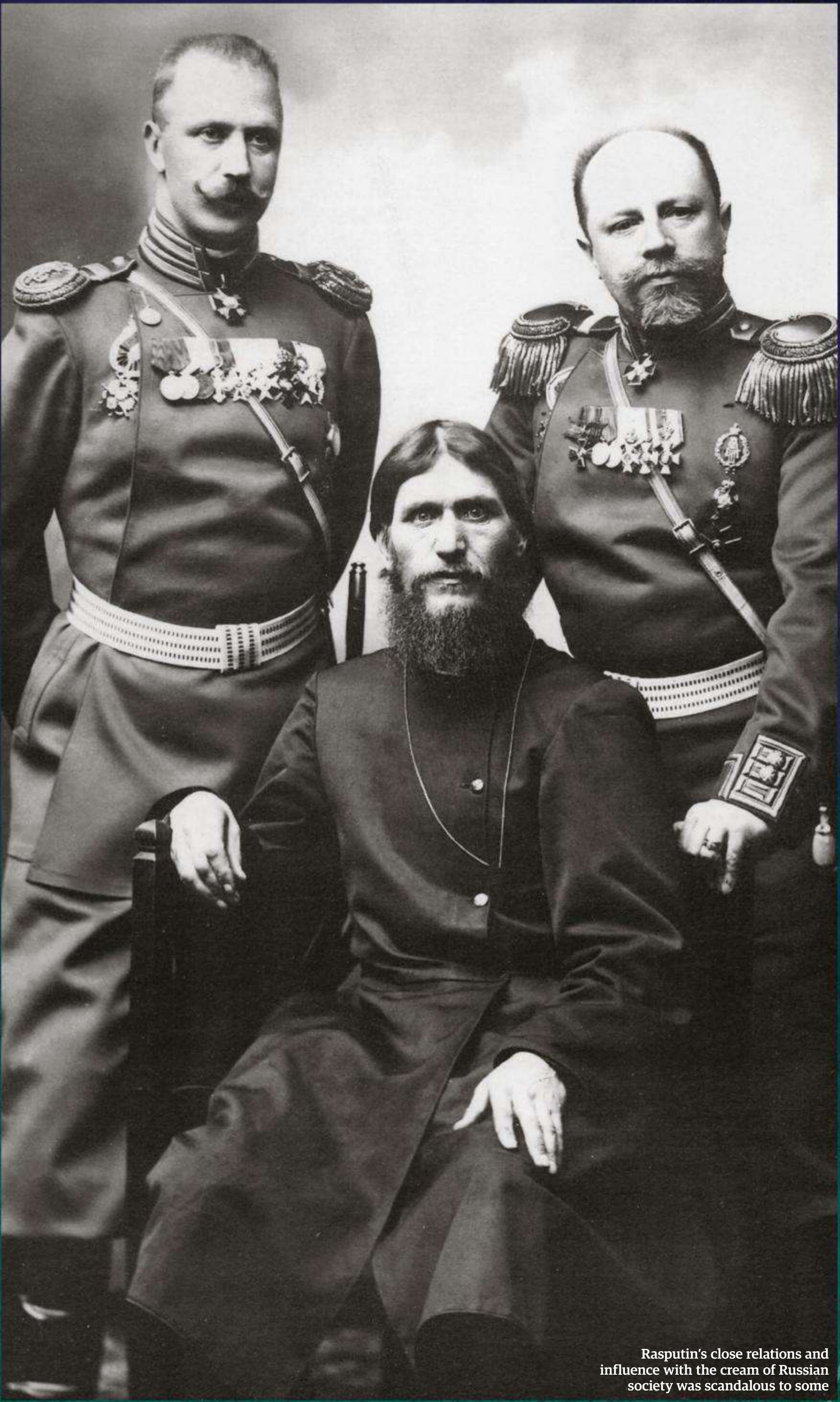
Born in Bessarabia, a region in Eastern Europe, Purishkevich followed his strong right-wing leanings and founded the Union of Russian People, a counter-revolutionary group. He was then elected to the Russian Duma, but he was a disruptive presence. Behind the scenes he was working on a plan to rid the country of Rasputin's influence for good.

Stanislaus de Lazovert

Originally born in Poland, Lazovert moved to Russia and crossed paths with Purishkevich during WWI. Trained as a doctor, it was Lazovert who was given the task of lacing the cakes with poison - potassium cyanide to be exact. Claiming to have used a dose large enough to kill several men, Rasputin somehow survived. It has since been argued that Lazovert's will failed him and he in fact couldn't poison the cakes.

Sergei Mikhailovich Sukhotin

A lieutenant in the Preobrazhensky Regiment, one of the oldest elite regiments of the Imperial Russian Army, it is believed that Sukhotin was an old friend of Felix's but was injured near the beginning of the war. Little is known about Sukhotin beyond this, but it is likely he had some familiarity with the men to become embroiled in the plot.



Rasputin's close relations and influence with the cream of Russian society was scandalous to some

LOVER OF THE RUSSIAN QUEEN

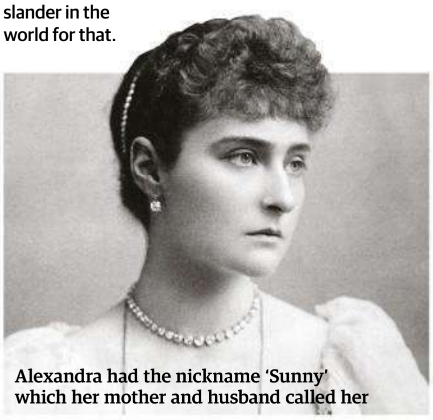
Was Rasputin's relationship with Alexandra purely platonic, or were his charms too great to resist?

Alexandra had never really been a popular woman; the granddaughter of Queen Victoria, she was an immensely traditional person, and it was these beliefs that led the imperial family to leave St Petersburg. This disconnect from her own people was fated to be a constant aspect of her life, as she lived in seclusion with her husband and children. As family became her whole life, she leapt at the chance, any chance, to save her only son. The moment Rasputin's apparent powers bore fruit, she made him a key member of the royal entourage.

When Nicholas made the disastrous decision to assume supreme command of the Russian army, the country was essentially run by Alexandra and in turn Rasputin, as her most trusted advisor. She proceeded to dismiss ministers and their deputies, making enemies left, right and centre. This hatred soon gave rise to rumours; people began to believe the two hated figures were secretly part of a pro-German group. Rasputin was painted as a dark, manipulative demon, and Alexandra as a hysterical, easily persuaded woman.

The public began to believe that the Germans, through Rasputin, had the imperial family in their clutches. The 'Mad Monk' already had a reputation as a womaniser, and now it was thought he had seduced the most important woman in Russia. Alexandra ignored the rumours that Rasputin had openly said the tsar would let him have sex with his wife whenever he wanted. The tsarina was accustomed to writing flowery letters to all her close companions, but when her letters to Rasputin fell into the wrong hands, they were catastrophically misinterpreted.

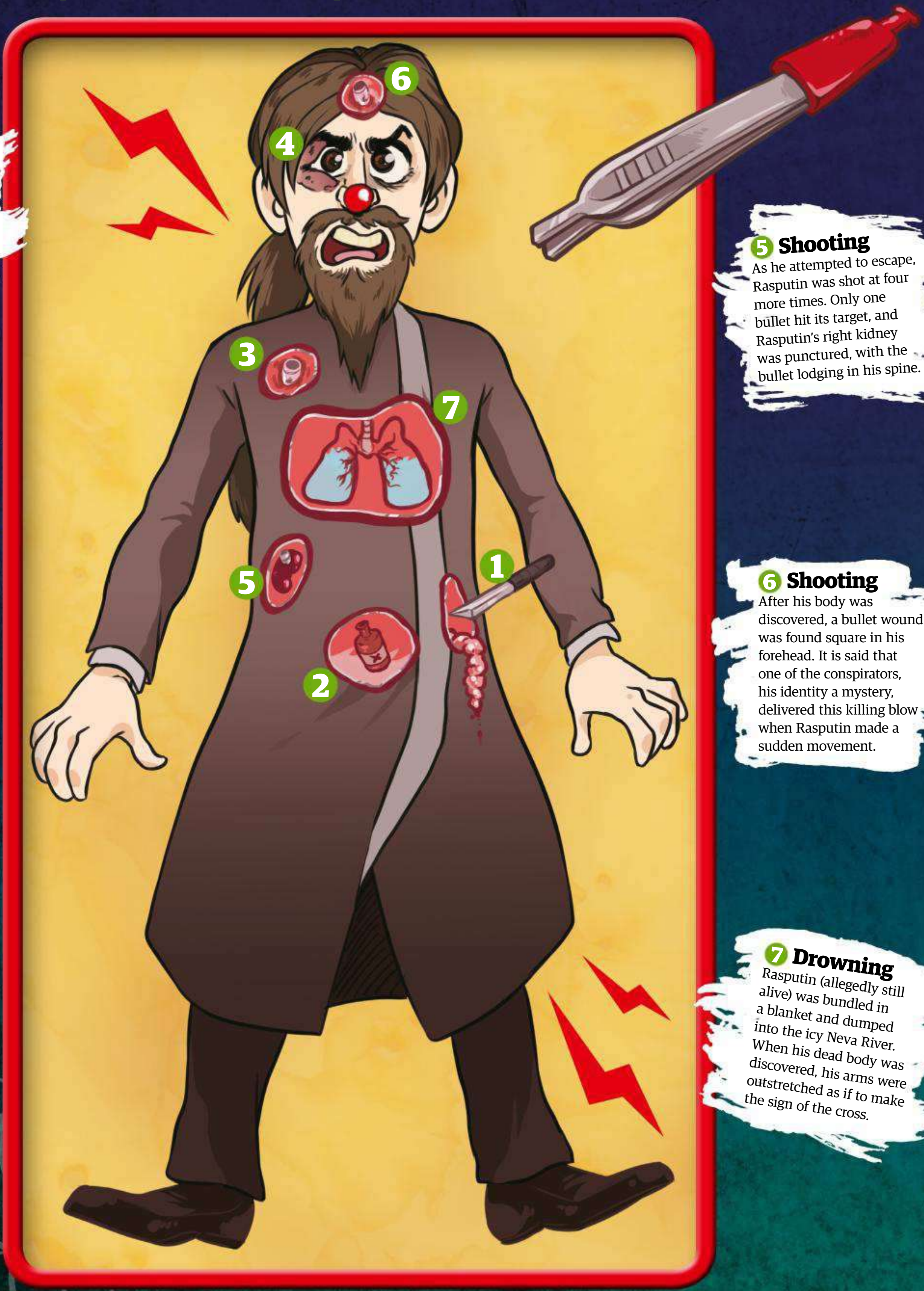
Pornographic caricatures of the two were produced and Rasputin became the most hated man in Russia. On the tsarina's part, she had many faults, but committing affairs was not one of them. It is more likely that she was drawn to Rasputin as she believed he the only man capable of saving her beloved son, and she was willing to put up with all the rumours and slander in the world for that.



Alexandra had the nickname 'Sunny' which her mother and husband called her

THE MANY LIVES OF RASPUTIN

As his conspirators discovered, Rasputin was a very difficult man to kill



1 Stabbing
A former prostitute stabbed Rasputin in the gut so violently that his entrails fell from his stomach. She also screamed, "I've killed the antichrist!" However, he survived after surgery.

2 Poison
Fuelled by the country's hate, a group of conspirators lured Rasputin to their home and encouraged him to dine on wine and cyanide-laced cakes. Despite consuming enough poison to kill several men, he was nevertheless unaffected.

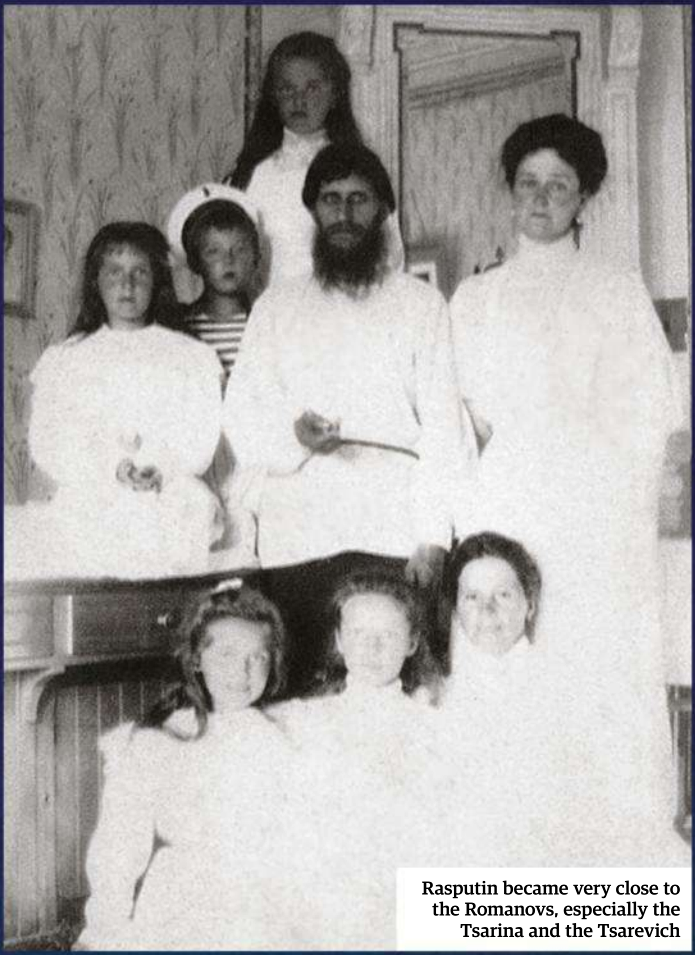
3 Shooting
After Rasputin failed to be affected by the poison, one of the conspirators rushed upstairs then returned with a revolver. Rasputin was shot through the chest. The bullet went clean through his body, but he still wasn't dead.

4 Beating
After falling to the floor having been shot, Rasputin tried to escape through the yard. The conspirators chased after him and beat him with a rubber club when they caught up.

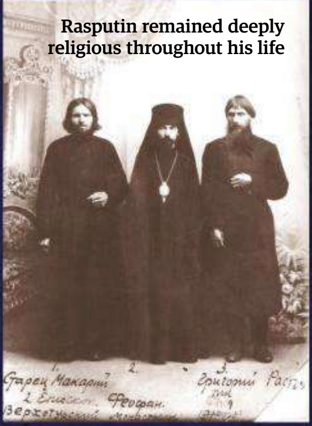
5 Shooting
As he attempted to escape, Rasputin was shot at four more times. Only one bullet hit its target, and Rasputin's right kidney was punctured, with the bullet lodging in his spine.

6 Shooting
After his body was discovered, a bullet wound was found square in his forehead. It is said that one of the conspirators, his identity a mystery, delivered this killing blow when Rasputin made a sudden movement.

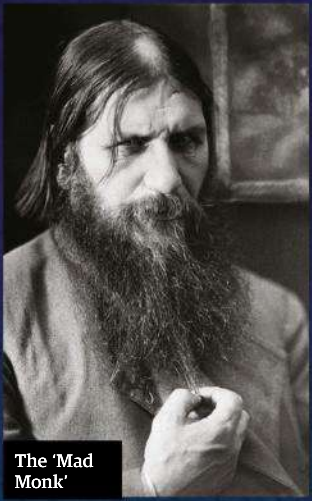
7 Drowning
Rasputin (allegedly still alive) was bundled in a blanket and dumped into the icy Neva River. When his dead body was discovered, his arms were outstretched as if to make the sign of the cross.



Rasputin became very close to the Romanovs, especially the Tsarina and the Tsarevich



Rasputin remained deeply religious throughout his life



The 'Mad Monk'

to organise secret sex rituals. For many who had met the 'Mad Monk' in passing, these claims were not out of the question, as he was seen to be overly intimate with women and his eyes, by all accounts, were oddly hypnotising. One memoir from the period wrote of Rasputin: "What eyes he has! You cannot endure his gaze for long. There is something difficult in him, it is like you can feel the physical pressure, even though his eyes sometimes glow with kindness, but how cruel can they be and how frightful in anger..." Many who had first adored the curious man were swept up in the hate campaign against him.

Some of Rasputin's enemies went to Nicholas and Alexandra directly to warn them of his influence, but both were quick to dismiss them. When Nicholas was urged to exile him to Tobolsk he commented, "I know Rasputin too well to believe all the tittle-tattle about him." One of the most damning accusations against Rasputin was that he was a member of the Khlysty, an underground sect split off from the Orthodox Church. The fact that he was a good dancer, and the sect was known for their dances and possible sexual promiscuity, seemed to add fuel to the accusation. Many figures in the Orthodox Church leapt on this, accusing him of immoral practises.

Against such a torrent of abuse, Nicholas had no choice but to investigate the holy man. However, after two months with nothing uncovered, the investigation ended. Anyone who criticised Rasputin was condemned by a royal family pushed to the brink. Politicians who spoke out against him often found themselves relieved of their positions, and more willing, obedient men were put in their place. Rasputin's influence now went beyond the Royal family and into politics as well. Even Bishop Theophan attempted to persuade the tsar to put some distance between himself and Rasputin, but was dismissed. Whether the allegations against Rasputin were true or not, many people now had a legitimate reason to loathe him.

> "SHE WAS NOT A WEAK WOMAN, BUT SHE WAS ULTIMATELY AT THE WHIM OF A MAN ABLE TO COMMAND IMMENSE POWER"

DAUGHTER OF THE 'MAD MONK'

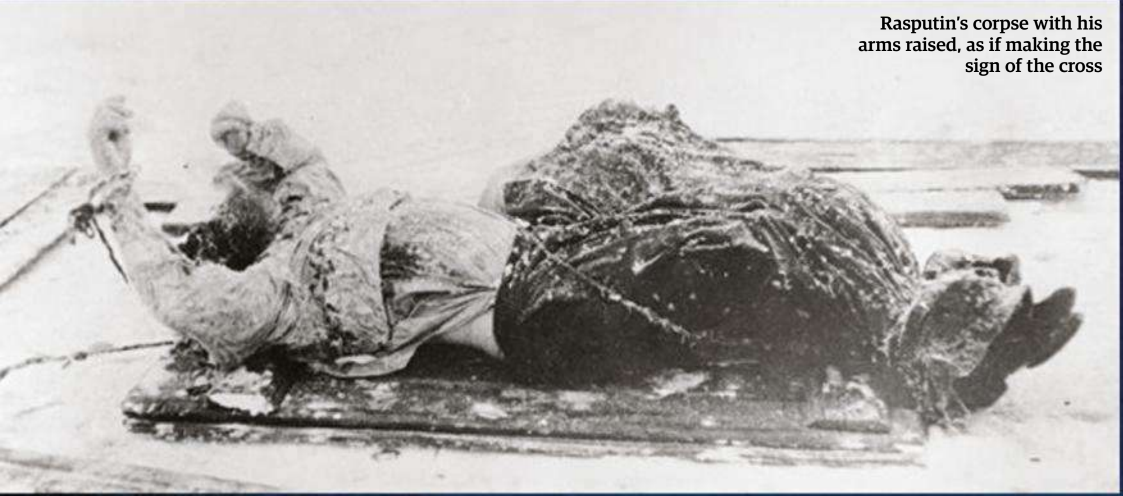
Forced to flee from Russia, Maria Rasputin led a life almost as eventful as her father's

When Rasputin abandoned his life of crime to become a holy man, horse thievery was not the only thing he left behind. He also said goodbye to his wife and three children: Dmitri, Maria and Varvara. It must have been peculiar for the children when their father returned as he had undergone a startling transformation, from vagabond to holy man. Maria recorded all her memories of her father in her diaries as she grew up, even complaining about his strict rules and long hours of prayer, "for which everything, anniversaries or penitences, served as an excuse." Maria eventually followed her father to the hallowed halls of St Petersburg in order to be trained to become a proper lady. She quickly became friends with the imperial family, but as we know, this was ill-fated. Maria's world was torn apart as her father was assassinated and later, her new friends, the Romanovs. It is rumoured that it was Maria who was forced to identify her father's body.

As Russia was torn apart Maria escaped and lived a fugitive's existence, constantly fleeing the entrapments of the Red Army. Maria travelled across all of Europe, married a man of 'dubious character', had two daughters, and lost her husband all in less than a decade. As Maria's family members disappeared, she performed across the continent as a cabaret dancer, while penning a staunch defence of her father entitled *The Real Rasputin*. The book and its successor, *My Father*, painted a very different portrait of her loathed and despised father. The Rasputin in Maria's text was closer to a pious saint and she claimed her enemies were responsible for the common perception of him. Maria continued to travel across Europe, but this time as a lion tamer in a travelling circus. Eventually Maria's non-stop lifestyle was forced to an end when she was mauled by a bear. Despite surviving the attack, her circus career was over, and she moved to Los Angeles and finally settled into a quiet life.

Maria (third from left) claimed to be psychic, and said that Betty Ford came to her in a dream

A post-mortem photograph of Rasputin - a bullet wound can clearly be seen in his forehead



Rasputin's corpse with his arms raised, as if making the sign of the cross

If Nicholas wasn't willing to condemn Rasputin with the rest of them, then the two of them would burn together. By associating and supporting a man who was regarded by many as a licentious, perverted and even evil force, Nicholas did little to bolster his own reputation. This reached an extreme when the tsar took supreme command of the Russian armies during WWI. As this meant frequent trips away from the capital, his wife was put in charge of domestic policy alongside the only advisor she now trusted - Rasputin. The backlash was immediate; all the ministers threatened to resign, the nobles loudly voiced their disgust at Nicholas' decision and pleaded with him to think again - but Rasputin's own headstrong determination had rubbed off on the impressionable tsar and he stood his ground.

Just as they had feared, Rasputin became Alexandra's close personal confidant. She was not a weak woman, but she was ultimately entirely at the whim of a man able to command immense power by speaking softly while dressed in rags. Rasputin ordered that the tsarina persuaded a far weaker man to obey - her husband. In this way Rasputin held the fate of Russia, and all of its citizens, within his hands. For the many who viewed him as a weird, immoral and dangerous peasant, this was simply unacceptable.

It is difficult to know exactly what Rasputin, at this time, believed. His entire demeanour was said to have changed immensely after an assassination attempt in 1914, and it is quite possible that the

THE BLOODY END OF A DYNASTY

When Nicholas II abdicated his throne, it marked the end of a history of tsardom that stretched back to Ivan IV 'The Terrible'

Nicholas II had never been a natural ruler and his father had not prepared him to rule believing that, as he was in his forties, he had a great many years yet. He was wrong and Nicholas, young, naive and ill-prepared became tsar aged just 26. This was the beginning of a reign that was clouded by bad judgements, mistakes and a blindness to the plight and opinions of his subjects. After the revolution of 1905 Nicholas had promised to listen to his people's demands for basic civil liberties, but because of his strong belief in the divine right of tsars, these promises were soon revoked.

After leading his country into disastrous and costly wars, conditions in Russia worsened. Food was scarce, soldiers died in their tens of thousands and defeat after defeat destroyed any confidence the people had in their leader. Prices soared and riots tore through the country, leaving the nation completely disillusioned by a regime that didn't seem to care about their welfare at all. Revolution was inevitable.

Nicholas ordered that the demonstrators be dealt with, and some 200 citizens were shot dead in the street. Eventually even the army garrison at Petrograd, the oldest and most loyal regiment, joined the fight and Nicholas had no choice but to abdicate his throne, aged 48.

Nicholas and his family were quickly exiled and imprisoned, forced to live on soldiers' rations, as they remained unaware of their ultimate fate. It was believed the tsar may eventually be put on trial, but the events of 17 July 1918 changed everything. Though there are many conflicting accounts, it is believed the family was awoken in the early hours and were led down to a basement room under the guise of safety.

However, as they assembled in the room a firing squad of seven communist soldiers filed in. With time only to splutter, "What? What?" Nicholas was shot dead. Only the young children survived the first hail of bullets, their jewel-laden dresses shielding them, but they were soon ran through with bayonets and shot in the head at close range. The elimination was not only of the family, but also of the line of tsars in Russia. The people believed they were better to rule themselves rather than rely on the aristocracy. However, they ultimately discovered that normal men could be just as terrible as tsars.

After their murders the Romanovs were canonised as martyrs by the Russian Orthodox Church, though outside of Russia

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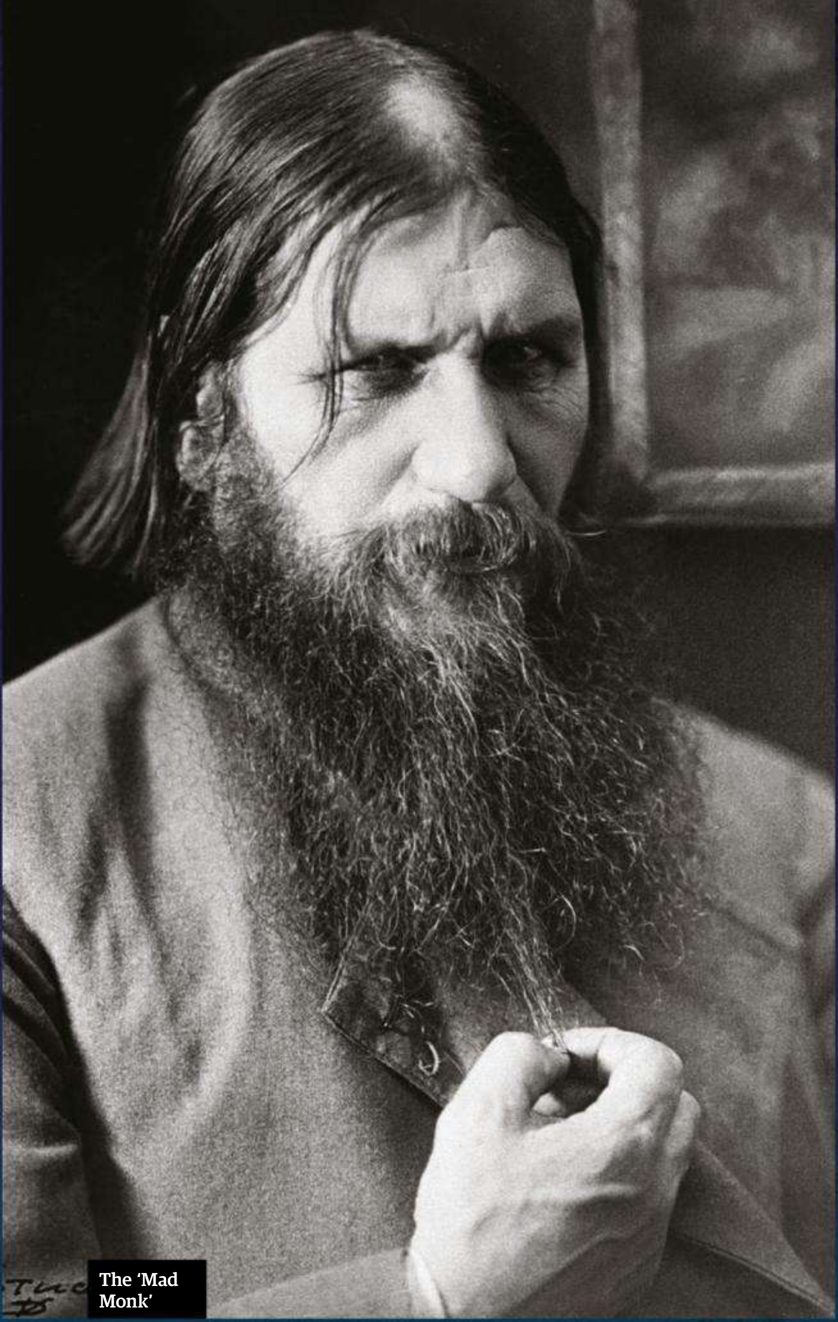


The 'Mad Monk'

1. Старец Макарий
2. 2. Епископ Феофан.
3. Григорий Распутин
1909
(Верхотурский монастырь

Rasputin remained deeply religious throughout his life

> "THERE WERE MANY WHO DOUBTED RASPUTIN, WHO CALLED HIM A CHARLATAN AND A FAKE THAT COERCED PEOPLE WITH PRETTY WORDS"

near-death experience made him a little warier of trusting people. Although he was said to be strict and somewhat harsh with his words, there is no evidence to prove that Rasputin was ever violent or cruel. His character was, and always had been, independent, headstrong and in possession of incredible self-belief.

Whether he thought he was doing the right thing or not, Rasputin had made some very dangerous enemies. With the tsarina refusing to acknowledge that he was a bad influence, the nobles decided to take matters into their own hands and eliminate the threat to Russia themselves. A group of conspirators, including the tsar's first cousin and a member of parliament, tricked Rasputin into meeting with them under the pretence of meeting the tsar's niece. Rasputin entered the Yusupov Palace on the night of 17 December 1916 and was not seen alive again. His disappearance was noted immediately the next morning, and a search began. His body was finally discovered, frozen solid beside the riverbank of the Malaya Nevka River. The man with the hypnotising eyes was dead.

When the conspirators planned Rasputin's murder, their goal was likely to eliminate the powerful influence over the monarchy. However, the monarchy could not be saved, not even by destroying Rasputin. Russia was already hurtling off the cliff by the time he was murdered, and it was far too late to save it. In December 1916, Rasputin wrote a letter to the tsar about a peculiar prophecy, that if he was killed by the tsar's relations then "none of your children will remain alive for more than two years." He also predicted the tsar's death, and the coming of the antichrist, to plummet the country into plague and poverty. He also claimed that "the Russian land will die."

There were many contemporaries who doubted Rasputin, who called him a charlatan and a fake that coerced people with pretty words and a hypnotic gaze. They may have been correct, and we now have no way of knowing Rasputin's true power. However, the 'Mad Monk' was right about one thing - the Romanovs were overthrown ten weeks after his death and, just as he predicted, within two years the entire family was dead. It had been very easy to place blame at the feet of the peculiar travelling mystic, rather than the weak leader who was supposed to be a father to all, but now both were dead, and Russia faced an uncertain, tumultuous and - if Rasputin was right - dark future.

John Dee

Occultist, mathematician, philosopher or spy: what lurked beneath the man who spanned the gap between magic and science?

The London-born John Dee was actually of Welsh descent, his family having made a place for themselves in the capital after the accession of a fellow Welshman, Henry VII, to the English throne. Over the years, the young and ambitious Dee invented a lineage that was far grander than his true humble beginnings, claiming a family connection with various Welsh princes, and even suggesting descent from the fabled King Arthur himself.

Dee gained his Bachelor's degree in 1545 from Cambridge. During his time at university, he had his first brush with the occult, in the form of alchemical studies, and came across the mathematical concepts that would become the basis of many of his later ideas. By the time he left university for good, he had already established something of a reputation in this area, though this did not stop him from taking Holy Orders in 1554.

Trouble erupted in 1555 when Dee was engaged by Queen Mary Tudor to use his already established skills to see what lay in store for herself and her half-sister, Princess Elizabeth. He found himself in hot water when on 28 May, he and his associates were arrested on suspicion of magic, a charge that rapidly escalated in the volatile political climate of the time to that of conjuring and witchcraft. Despite the potentially fatal situation, Dee was eventually cleared of all charges, and emerged as household chaplain to Edmund Bonner, Bishop of London.

Upon the accession of Elizabeth I in 1558, Dee's fortunes appeared to be improving. The new monarch was said to have chosen her coronation date based on a horoscope that Dee had cast for her and he was generally held in favour by the Queen. Despite this seemingly auspicious start and the connection he had with Elizabeth throughout his life, Dee had a fluctuating career and he never achieved the level of patronage and recognition that he felt was his due.

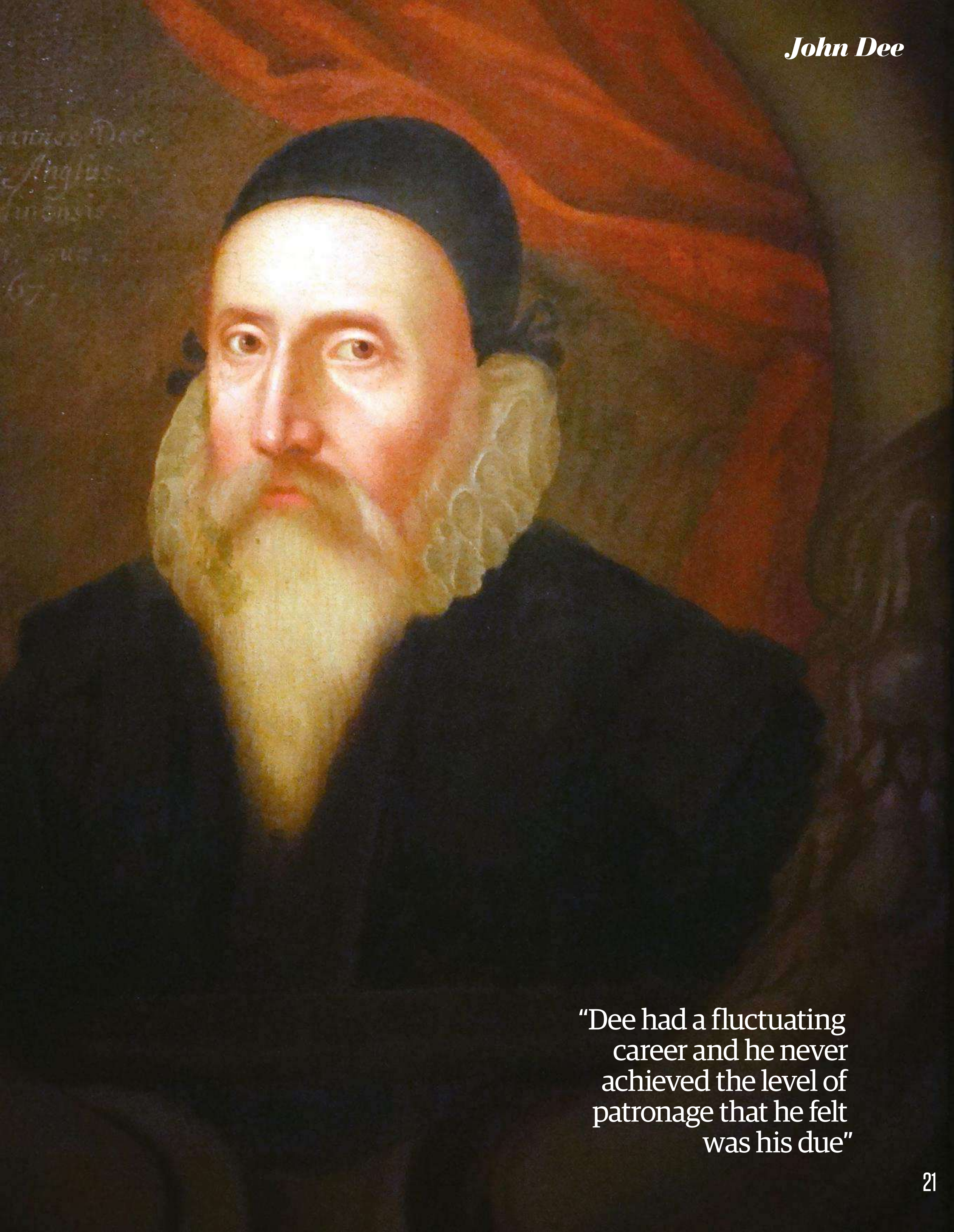
By the 1560s, the mystically inclined Dee had fully embraced the occult and arcane, and in 1564 he produced a work titled *The Hieroglyphic Monad*, exploring the meaning of a glyph that he himself had created. Ever hopeful, he dedicated

Defining moment

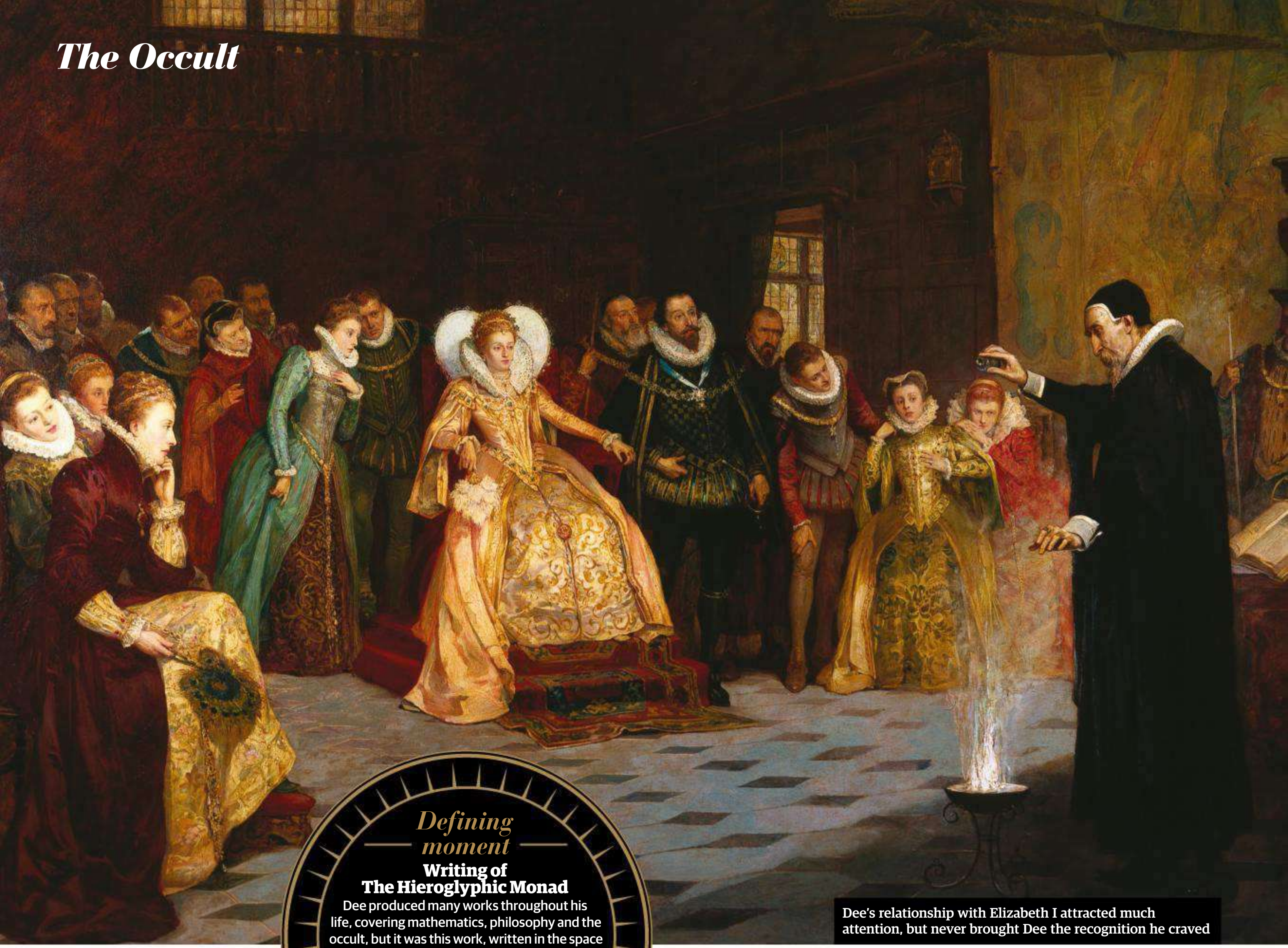
Arrested for sorcery

In the politically perilous times when the succession was far from certain, Dee found himself imprisoned for magical dabbling that could be interpreted as treason when he created horoscopes for Queen Mary I, her husband Philip of Spain and Princess Elizabeth. Torture was authorised to be used against him, though it is unclear whether Dee was actually subjected to the rack during his stay at the Tower.

1555



"Dee had a fluctuating career and he never achieved the level of patronage that he felt was his due"



Dee's relationship with Elizabeth I attracted much attention, but never brought Dee the recognition he craved

Defining moment

Writing of The Hieroglyphic Monad

Dee produced many works throughout his life, covering mathematics, philosophy and the occult, but it was this work, written in the space of 12 days, that was considered most important by his contemporaries and continues to intrigue and confuse readers today. It is this work that is taken as evidence of the link between Dee and Rosicrucian ideas.

1564

the decidedly dense text to Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian II, though again it did not bring the rewards Dee had hoped for. More success came from his attempts to have references to himself as a conjuror removed from Foxe's highly popular work, *Acts And Monuments*: the critical comments were removed from later editions of the text, though his reputation could not be changed so easily.

Dee was also vociferous in his support of English expansion in the New World, and he devoted much time and effort to this cause, attempting to boost England's claims over those of Spain in the continuing battle for supremacy over the territory. In 1577 he published *General And Rare Memorials Pertaining To The Perfect Art Of Navigation*, outlining his ambitious ideas regarding England's developing empire. As was the case with so many of his visions, however, the majority of his ideas in this area were not adopted.

A great lover of books, Dee turned his attentions to developing a private library in his Mortlake home. He expanded it into a great wonder, including many texts of an occult nature, and it was known as one of the leading libraries in Europe and the largest personally owned library in England during his lifetime. The great fascination of the occult coupled with a burning desire for greater recognition was again made clear in 1574, when Dee wrote to William Cecil, Lord Treasurer to Elizabeth I. Dee apparently claimed to have knowledge of hidden treasure in the Welsh Marches, hinting at his ability to recover it for the right patron.

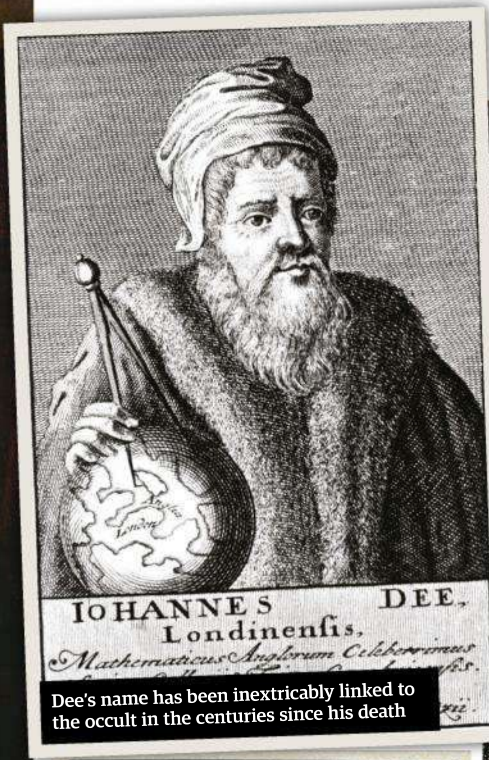
The 1580s saw Dee into his fifties and signalled a change of direction, as he finally acknowledged his disappointment about his lack of advancement.

> "He believed… that what he was learning through Kelley and the angels would be profitable to the entire human race"

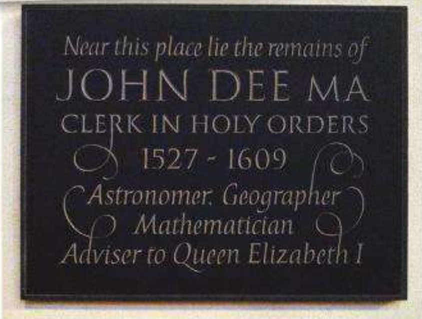
As such, Dee switched his attentions even more fully towards the occult, and it was now that he devoted himself to communicating with spirits and angels. For this work he required a partner skilled in the art of crystal gazing to act as go-between for the two worlds and, after impressing him at an audition, Dee finally settled on the unlikely choice of convicted criminal Edward Kelley.

Their attempts were deemed successful, and Dee fully believed that, through Kelley, they had made contact with angels. These communications were meticulously recorded by Dee. Despite his links with the occult, he was a devout Christian, and prayer and fasting played a large role in his spiritual communications. His motives were also not, arguably, entirely selfish – he believed, apparently wholeheartedly, that what he was learning through Kelley and the angels would be profitable to the entire human race.

Kelley was not the only questionable individual to whom Dee was drawn in his lifetime; it was during this decade that Dee, at the behest of Albert Leski, a Polish nobleman, was induced to uproot his family, along with Kelley, and move to Poland. The whole situation soon fell apart, as it transpired that Leski didn't have a penny to his name and was even further from favour at his native court

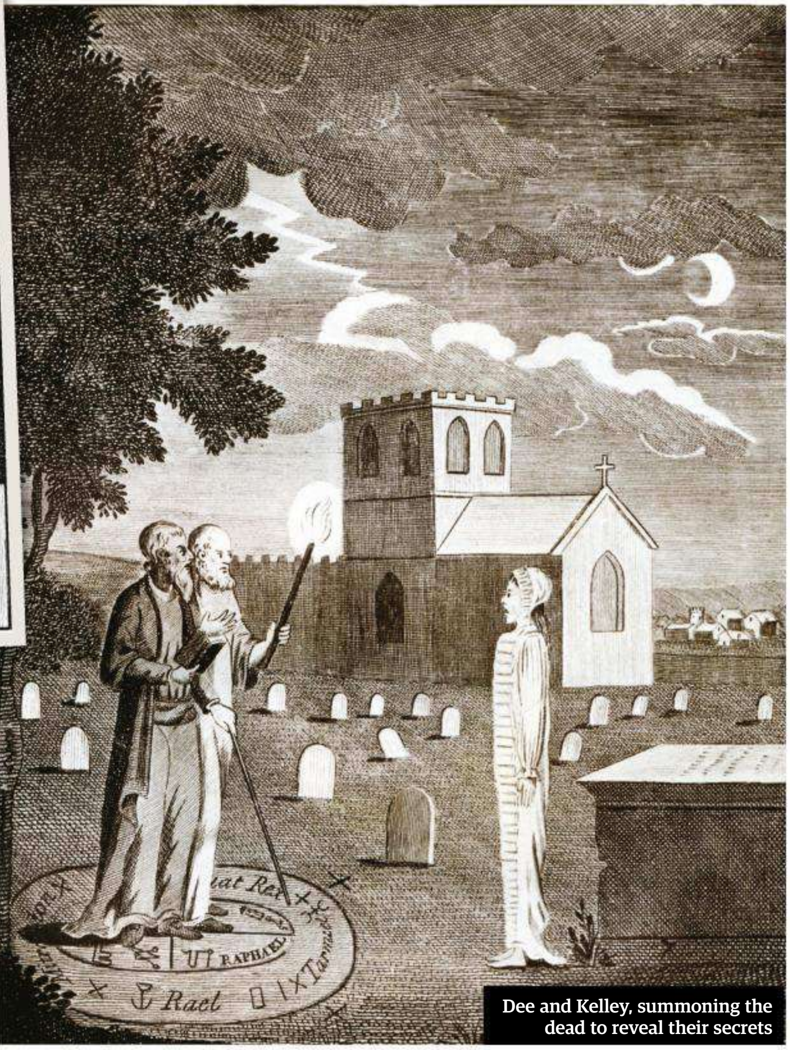


Dee's name has been inextricably linked to the occult in the centuries since his death



Near this place lie the remains of
JOHN DEE MA
CLERK IN HOLY ORDERS
1527 - 1609
Astronomer, Geographer
Mathematician
Adviser to Queen Elizabeth I

A memorial plaque for Dee, hung inside St Mary the Virgin Mortlake in 2013



Dee and Kelley, summoning the dead to reveal their secrets

than Dee felt at his own. Instead of returning home however, Dee, with the ever-present Kelley and their families, embarked upon a tour of Europe. They continued their angelic communications (indeed it had been the angels that told them, according to Kelley, to go to Poland with Leski in the first place). The pair attempted to interest some great names in their work with angels, holding an audience with Emperor Rudolf II and King Stefan Batory of Poland. Even here Dee lost out; while he focused on angelic communication, Kelley's skill at alchemy saw his eventual appointment as chief alchemist to the Emperor.

It was this time in Europe that helped promote Dee's lingering reputation as a spy in the pay of Elizabeth I. Despite being greatly respected for his intellectual abilities, there was an ever-present suspicion from the monarchs he approached.

Defining moment

Meeting Edward Kelley

Dee's relationship with Kelley defined a large portion of his life, the younger man facilitating Dee's desire to explore angelic communication and leading him deeper into the world of the occult. Several texts were dictated by the angels through Kelley and faithfully recorded by Dee, which provided valuable insights into their work together.

1582

As the decade neared an end, relations between Kelley and Dee began to deteriorate. This was not helped by the younger man – Kelley was nearly 30 years Dee's junior – announcing that one of their angel communicators had declared that the men must share everything in common – including, much to Dee's consternation – their wives. Although it appears that this arrangement was entered into, Dee and Kelley parted company not long afterwards – though there continues to be some dispute as to the parentage of the child born nine months later to Dee's third wife.

His long absence from home had serious consequences. The house at Mortlake was in a sorry state due to vandalism, and his precious library had been ransacked. The political and religious environment to which he returned was also not very welcoming, the tide having turned against the occult beliefs that Dee held so dear and leaving him with even less hope of gaining favour. Despite this he was granted the role of warden at Christ's College, Manchester in 1595, but the 68-year-old Dee didn't manage to properly benefit even here as he was not held in any great respect by those he kept watch over. He also came under fire for his involvement with the exorcist craze that gripped the capital around that time, and for his apparent connection to John Darrell, as well as claims of fraudulent possession. All of this mean that any hopes of further promotion or advancement were completely dashed by the end of the affair.

Rumours still persist to this day, but it is highly unlikely that Dee was a member of the Rosicrucian Order, and in fact there is no hard evidence that the Order even existed during Dee's lifetime. Along with some of the more extreme claims regarding Dee, the factual truth does very little to hamper the persistent legends surrounding this learned and intriguing figure.

Dee fared little better when James I followed Elizabeth on the throne, and the new monarch was not interested in supporting the famed occultist. Dee went on to live out his years in poverty and died in c.1609 at Mortlake, under the care of his daughter Katherine.

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Nostradamus

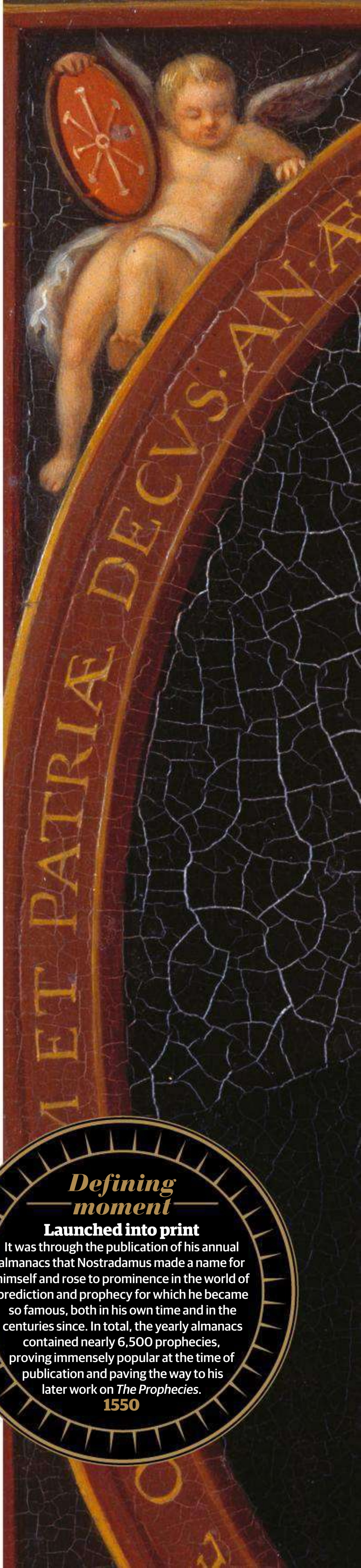
One of the most infamous oracles of all time, was Nostradamus a divine prophet or a fraud?

Hailed recently as the author of the 'Gospel of Doom for the modern age', Michel de Nostredame – or Nostradamus as he is more commonly known – has had a chequered reputation over the centuries. Born in the French town of Saint-Rémy-de-Provence as 1503 came to a close, Nostradamus was one of at least nine children born to a notary father and a mother from who he could claim a family history in medicine. Little could they have suspected, however, that his name would become synonymous with mayhem and catastrophe both during his lifetime and beyond.

Although the details of his life are often disputed, it is generally assumed that Nostradamus began his professional life at the University of Avignon, although this was brought to an abrupt end in 1521 due to the spread of plague to the city. This opened up new horizons for the young man, and, if reports are to be believed, Nostradamus did not waste the time that followed, spending eight years researching herbal remedies as he roamed the countryside. This stood him in good stead for working as an apothecary, a vocation that he took to keenly for several years, providing cures and tinctures for those who came to him in his self-imposed exile.

In 1529, he decided to try again at the university route, and enrolled to study for a doctorate in medicine at the University of Montpellier. This was also to be short-lived, as he was asked to leave when not only his previous trade as an apothecary was discovered (something that was strictly against the rules of the university) but also rumours abounded that he had been speaking out against the medical profession. This lack of formal training did not, however, greatly harm his prospects. In 1531, Nostradamus moved to Agen, married and had two children. Following the death of his wife, he continued on with his previous travels. It was during this time that his reputation as a healer of plague was established (although there is little evidence that his attempted cures in either Marseille or his native Salon-de-Provence were successful) before in 1547, he settled once again in his hometown. Here, Nostradamus married for the second and final time, his new wife a widow of wealth who bore him six children during their time together.

Nostradamus's first official dabbling with the occult and connected subjects came in the mid-1500s, when he produced the first of a long run of annual almanacs of predictions and weather forecasts, capitalising on the popularity of this new craze. Nostradamus's work catapulted him into the limelight, and he soon found himself catering for the prestigious, building up a client base that prized his ability to produce personalised predictions. Despite his reputation as a seer, however, Nostradamus expected his clients to do a lot of the legwork. Whereas a professional astrologer would calculate birth charts himself, Nostradamus requested this

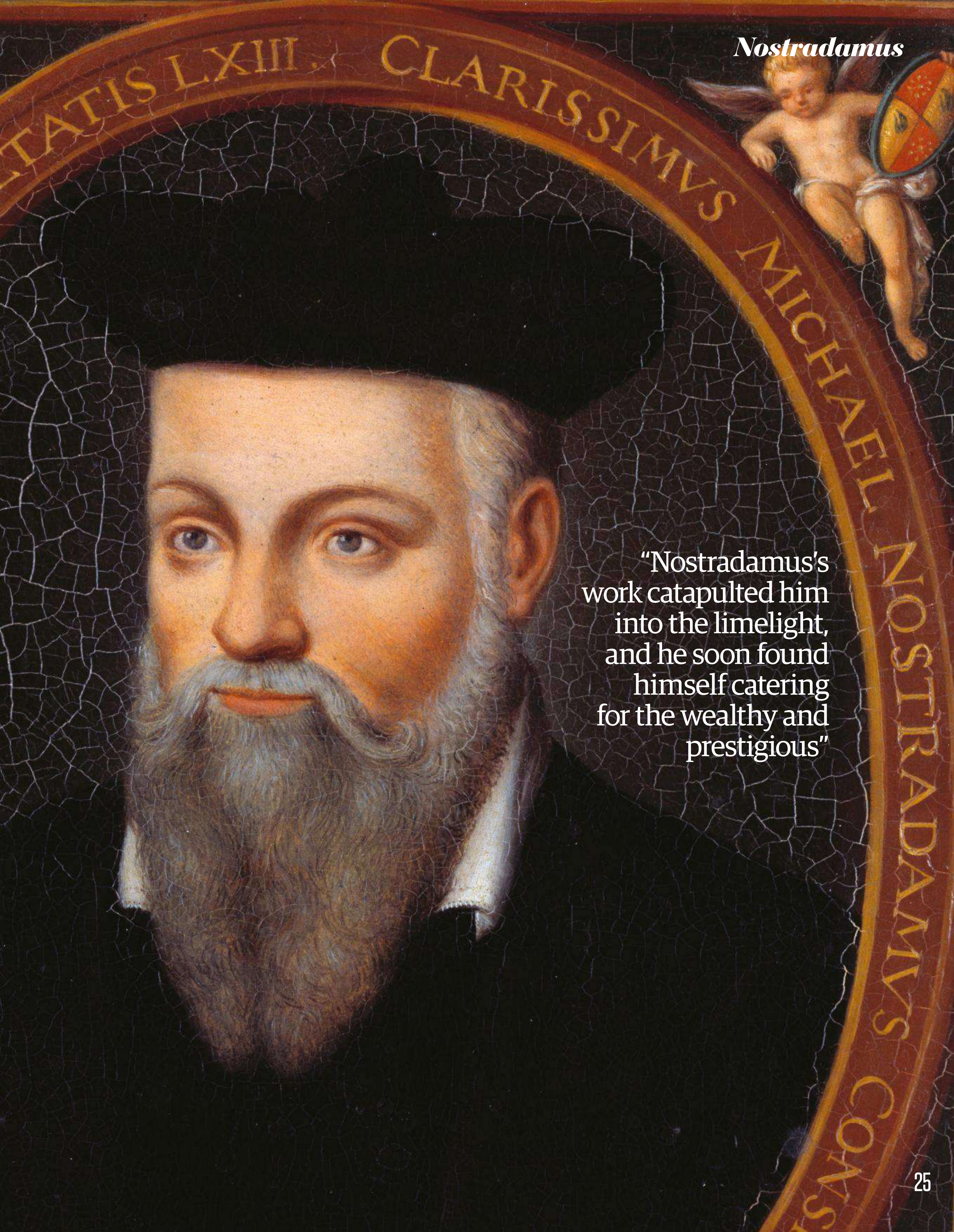


Defining moment

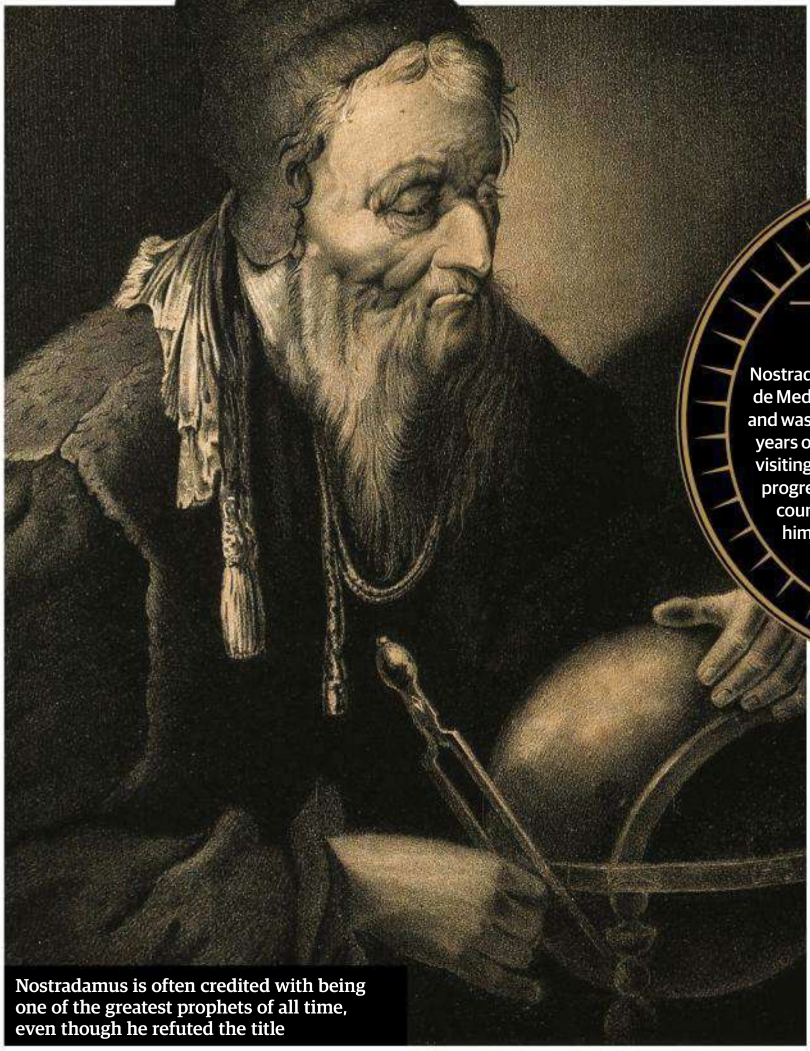
Launched into print

It was through the publication of his annual almanacs that Nostradamus made a name for himself and rose to prominence in the world of prediction and prophecy for which he became so famous, both in his own time and in the centuries since. In total, the yearly almanacs contained nearly 6,500 prophecies, proving immensely popular at the time of publication and paving the way to his later work on *The Prophecies*.

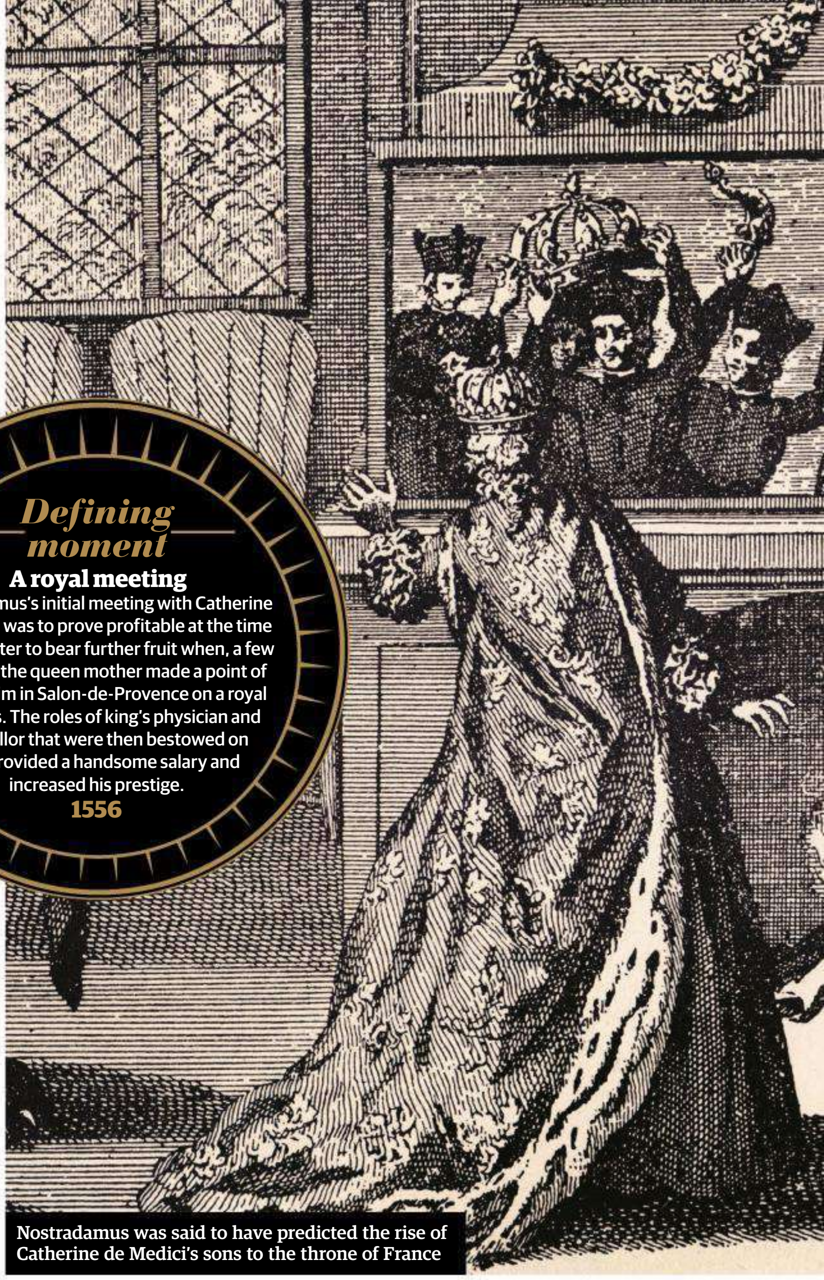
1550


TATIS LXIII. CLARISSIMVS MICHAEL NOSTRADAMVS CONS

> “Nostradamus’s work catapulted him into the limelight, and he soon found himself catering for the wealthy and prestigious”



Nostradamus is often credited with being one of the greatest prophets of all time, even though he refuted the title



Nostradamus was said to have predicted the rise of Catherine de Medici's sons to the throne of France

Defining moment

A royal meeting

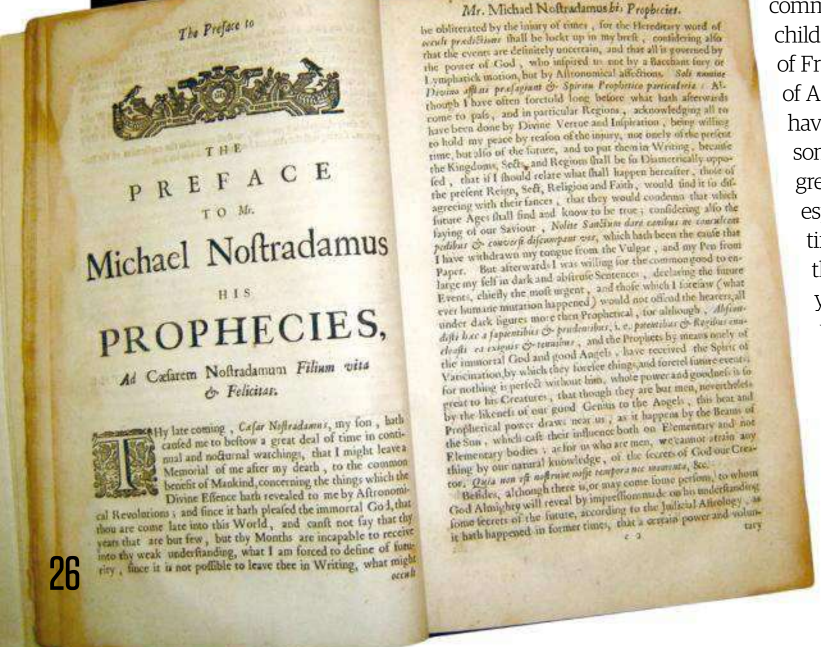
Nostradamus's initial meeting with Catherine de Medici was to prove profitable at the time and was later to bear further fruit when, a few years on, the queen mother made a point of visiting him in Salon-de-Provence on a royal progress. The roles of king's physician and councillor that were then bestowed on him provided a handsome salary and increased his prestige.

1556

information be provided. This was potentially due to a lack of skill and confidence in that area, as the charts that he did produce did not stand up under scrutiny and led to criticism from other astrologers.

As Nostradamus rose to prominence in the world of the mystical and arcane, Catherine de Medici, queen of Henry II of France, also sought out his services. It could be said this was skilfully orchestrated by Nostradamus himself, as a prediction in his almanac for 1555 contained a prediction that hinted at impending danger for the royal family. Understandably worried by this and believing wholeheartedly in the power of such predictions, the queen summoned Nostradamus to Paris in 1556, and during the meeting, commissioned horoscopes for her children, including the future kings of France Charles IX and Henry of Anjou. Nostradamus is said to have predicted the rise of Anjou, something that must have caused great satisfaction for Catherine, especially as her son was at the time only sixth in line to the throne. They met again some years later when Nostradamus was an old man, in his native Salon-de-Provence itself. The royal party of Catherine and Charles IX braved the plague-ridden town to meet the man who Catherine held in such esteem. During the meeting, Nostradamus was created both a king's physician and a royal councillor, along with being rewarded for his services with 200 écus.

The Prophecies were translated into several languages and went through many editions



The Preface to

THE
PREFACE
TO Mr.
Michael Noſtradamus
HIS
PROPHECIES,
Ad Cæſarem Noſtradamum *Filium vita*
& Felicitas.

THy late coming, *Cæſar Noſtradamus*, my ſon, hath cauſed me to beſtow a great deal of time in continual and nocturnal watchings, that I might leave a Memorial of me after my death, to the common benefit of Mankind, concerning the things which the Divine Eſſence hath revealed to me by Aſtronomical Revolutions; and ſince it hath pleaſed the immortal God, that thou are come late into this World, and canſt not ſay that thy years that are but few, but thy Months are incapable to receive into thy weak underſtanding, what I am forced to define of futurity, ſince it is not poſſible to leave thee in Writing, what might *occult*

Mr. Michael Noſtradamus *his Prophecies.*

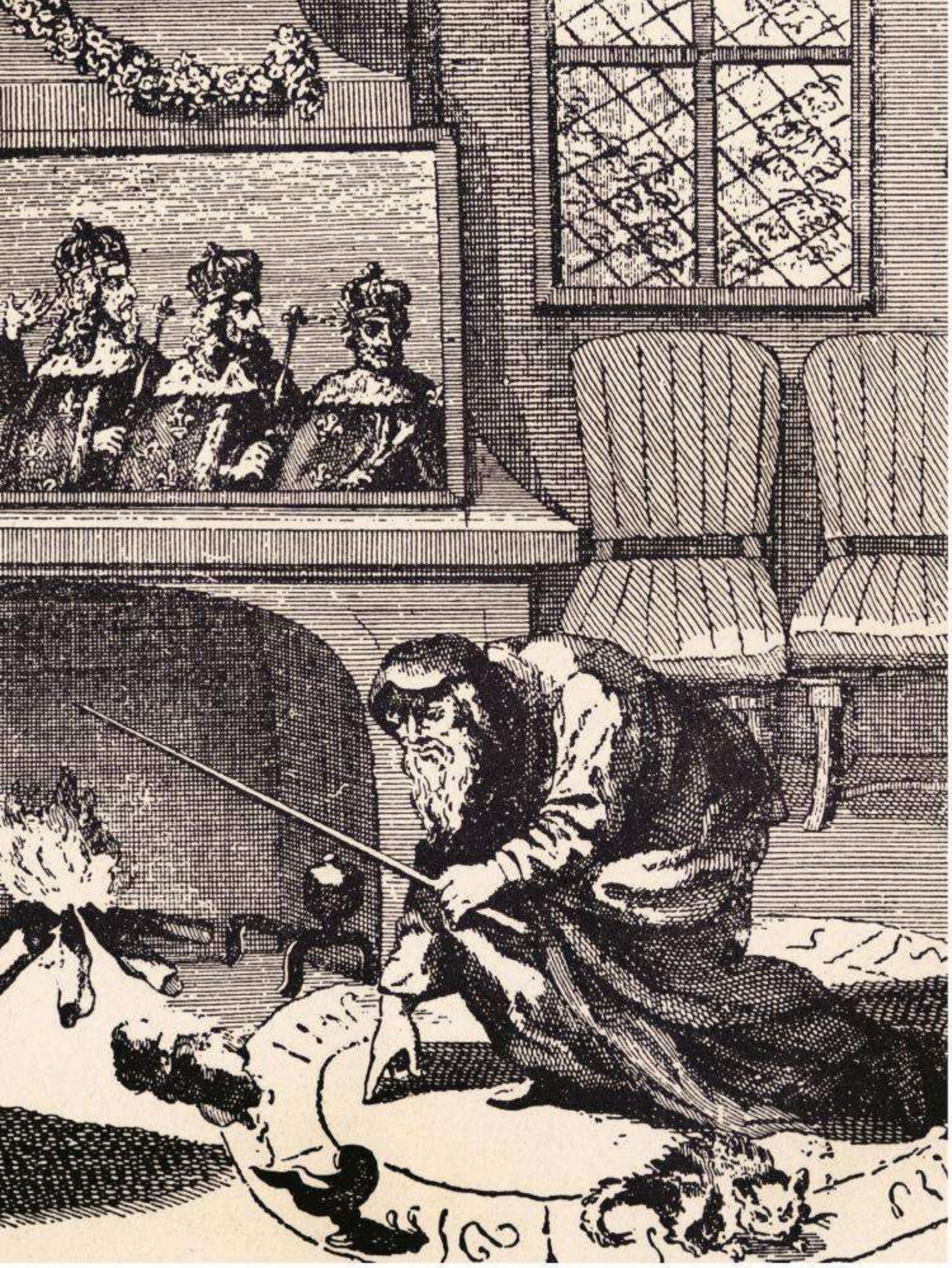
be obliterated by the injury of times, for the Hereditary word of *occult predictions* ſhall be lockt up in my breſt, conſidering alſo that the events are definitely uncertain, and that all is governed by the power of God, who inſpired us not by a Bacchant fury or Lymphatick motion, but by Aſtronomical affections. *Soli numine Divino afflati præſagiunt & Spiritu Prophetico particularia*: Although I have often foretold long before what hath afterwards come to paſs, and in particular Regions, acknowledging all to have been done by Divine Vertue and Inſpiration, being willing to hold my peace by reaſon of the injury, not onely of the preſent time, but alſo of the future, and to put them in Writing, becauſe the Kingdoms, Sects, and Regions ſhall be ſo Diametrically oppoſed, that if I ſhould relate what ſhall happen hereafter, thoſe of the preſent Reign, Sect, Religion and Faith, would find it ſo diſagreeing with their fancies, that they would condemn that which future Ages ſhall find and know to be true; conſidering alſo the ſaying of our Saviour, *Nolite Sanctum dare canibus ne conculcent pedibus & converſi diſrumpant vos*, which hath been the cauſe that I have withdrawn my tongue from the Vulgar, and my Pen from Paper. But afterwards I was willing for the common good to enlarge my ſelf in dark and abſtruſe Sentences, declaring the future Events, chiefly the moſt urgent, and thoſe which I foreſaw (what ever humane mutation happened) would not offend the hearers, all under dark figures more then Prophetical, for although, *Abſcondiſti hæc a ſapientibus & prudentibus, i.e. potentibus & Regibus enucleaſti ea exiguis & tenuibus*, and the Prophets by means onely of the immortal God and good Angels, have received the Spirit of Vaticination, by which they foreſee things, and foretel future events, for nothing is perfect without him, whoſe power and goodneſs is ſo great to his Creatures, that though they are but men, nevertheleſs by the likeneſs of our good Genius to the Angels, this heat and Prophetical power draws near us, as it happens by the Beams of the Sun, which caſt their influence both on Elementary and not Elementary bodies; as for us who are men, we cannot attain any thing by our natural knowledge, of the ſecrets of God our Creator, *Quia non eſt noſtrum noſſe tempora nec momenta*, &c.

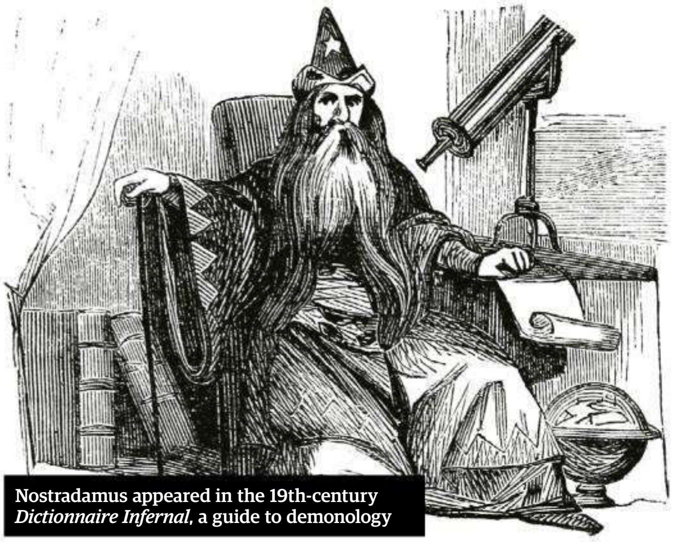
Beſides, although there is, or may come ſome perſons, to whom God Almighty will reveal by impreſſions made on his underſtanding ſome ſecrets of the future, according to the Judicial Aſtrology, as it hath happened in former times, that a certain power and voluntary

c 2

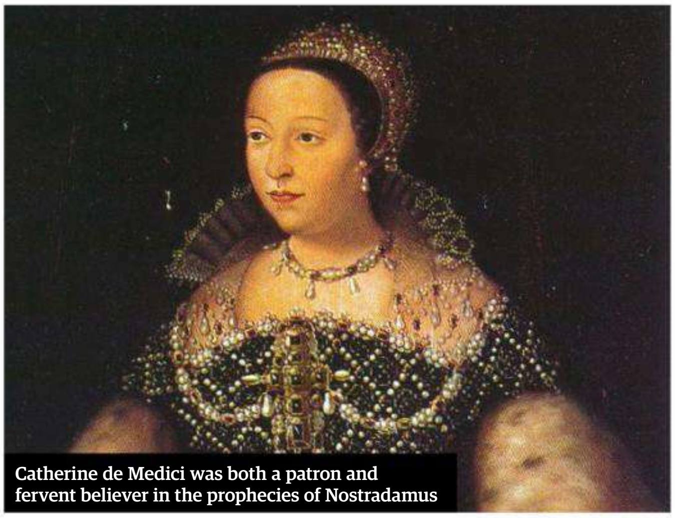
Nostradamus was not popular with everyone, however. There were those who denounced him and called him a liar and a fake; some even went as far as to declare him insane or outright evil. This less than flattering reputation has survived long after his death due to the resurge of interest in the most popular and famous of Nostradamus's works – the predictions contained in the series of quatrains known as *The Prophecies*. Published in three editions, the last after his death, the quatrains speak in general terms of various types of catastrophes, focusing particularly on natural disasters such as earthquakes, plagues and floods, along with wars, murders and invasions. Some have even credited Nostradamus with predicting numerous pivotal events throughout history, from

> "Nostradamus did not fit the image of a man elected by god to bring his word to the world"





Nostradamus appeared in the 19th-century *Dictionnaire Infernal*, a guide to demonology



Catherine de Medici was both a patron and fervent believer in the prophecies of Nostradamus

the Great Fire of London and the French Revolution to the two world wars, the 9/11 tragedy and even the death of Princess Diana.

The general vagueness of *The Prophecies* – in most cases the quatrains lack dates entirely, and where they are mentioned they are used in the most general terms – allows a reader to interpret his words according to their own beliefs and agenda. Indeed, one of the greatest criticisms of the writings of Nostradamus – both from his contemporaries and modern readers – is the general feeling of confusion due to the wordiness and lack of clarity, with more than one client complaining that they could not understand a word that had been written for them. This has been further hindered by the fact that no two editions or even copies in some cases of the quatrains are the same – both printing methods and the translation process have compounded the often-impenetrable nature of his works.

Defining moment

End of Days

After his death, Nostradamus's reputation and reach continued to grow. The powers and pronouncements attributed to him have reached beyond the grave, including the (misinterpreted) assertion that the world would end in 2012. Nostradamus has been credited with predicting many historical events, and the legend lives on in reprintings of his works and more than 2,000 commentaries to date.

1566

Although heralded as a prophet, Nostradamus did not fit the image of a man elected by god to bring his word to the world, and in fact it was not a term Nostradamus used in relation to himself: he actually refuted the claim on at least one occasion in print. The label of prophet ascribed to him by his supporters – much like that of 'doctor,' which was used of him on several occasions despite the fact he had never achieved a degree in medicine – did more to enhance his status than hinder it, and it would have been a much less worldly man than Nostradamus who would have spurned the benefits to be had from such an association.

It has been said that Nostradamus worried for his reputation and even his life on occasion. Some sources maintain that he feared the might and power of the Inquisition itself, although this has since been disputed by historians, as it was religious differences rather than any occult belief or practice that led to his brief conflict with the Church in Agen in 1538. There have also been several practices attributed to Nostradamus through the ages to enhance his occult status, with assertions made that he was adept in fire and water gazing. These claims, however, cannot be substantiated by any historical sources, and instead form part of the ever-evolving myth that surrounds Nostradamus. There is also little evidence to support accusations of secret adherence to Protestantism and any hostility towards the Catholic Church; his writings contain no censure of the church and he was favoured by Catholic leaders such as Catherine de Medici, his client base being drawn from a varied mix of Protestant and Catholic backgrounds.

By the mid-1560s, the elderly Nostradamus was not in good health, suffering increasingly from gout and dropsy. Perhaps sensing the end was near, he set his affairs in order, providing for his wife to live comfortably in the event she should remarry and also leaving provision for his children after his death. This was not done a moment too soon; on the night of 1 July 1566, according to legend, Nostradamus went to bed with the chilling prediction to his secretary that he would not be alive come morning. True to his word, he was discovered dead the next day, exactly as he had predicted.

Secrets of the Alchemists

Medieval alchemists tried to find the ancient recipe for making gold and achieving immortality. None succeeded, yet modern science owes much to their techniques

In 1666, renowned English mathematician, astronomer and natural philosopher, Sir Isaac Newton, observed light entering a prism, and from this experience he made a brilliant discovery about light and colour; that white light is made up of a spectrum of several colours. He was fascinated with light, and believed that it had a close relationship to the concept that the early modern scientist knew as 'the vegetable spirit.'

Newton was constantly awed by the beauty and complexity nature. Over time, he concluded that the massive variety of life and processes that occur in nature, such as growth and decay, meant there must be some driving force making it all happen. He believed that the 'vegetable spirit' was that force, and thought it might be linked with light.

To those only familiar with Newton's discoveries in mathematics and physics, the idea of the 'vegetable spirit' might seem strange, and even pseudo-scientific. On the other hand, this idea and several others of the famous scientist were closely associated with a subject that he is not very often known for studying, and yet spent a great amount of his time devoted to: alchemy. In his lifetime, Newton wrote around one million words on alchemy, which shows how committed he was to the practice. Through his research into alchemy, Newton hoped to uncover the secret of the 'vegetable spirit', or the spirit of life.

Even to Newton in the 17th century, alchemy was an archaic art with hundreds of texts available for him to study. But Newton was not the first to turn to alchemy in order to find what he was looking for, and was in fact one of the last in a long line of alchemists who sought to use the art for the purpose of discovering remarkable secrets.

The primary mission of ancient and Medieval alchemists was finding the way to create gold and the elixir of life. Unfortunately for them and Newton, alchemy has been shrouded in secrets and mystery throughout its existence, particularly during the Medieval period. Alchemists have repeatedly defended this secrecy, stating that its purpose is to keep the spectacular knowledge hidden from unworthy individuals who might use it for nefarious gains (though today we might suspect that the true reason for the secrecy is that, from the very beginning, the goals of the alchemists were impossible to achieve).

The origins of alchemy can be traced back 2,000 years before Newton to the Ancient Egyptians and Greeks. In fact, the word 'alchemy' may be derived from Khem, which was an Ancient Greek term for Egypt. Even though alchemical tradition often states that the founding father of the practice was Hermes Trismegistus, it is very difficult to tie the root of alchemy to one person. On the other hand, it is much more likely that the first proto-alchemists were Egyptian metalworkers, who would have worked with several different types of metal. It was gold that had the most value, therefore many focused their attention on this precious metal.

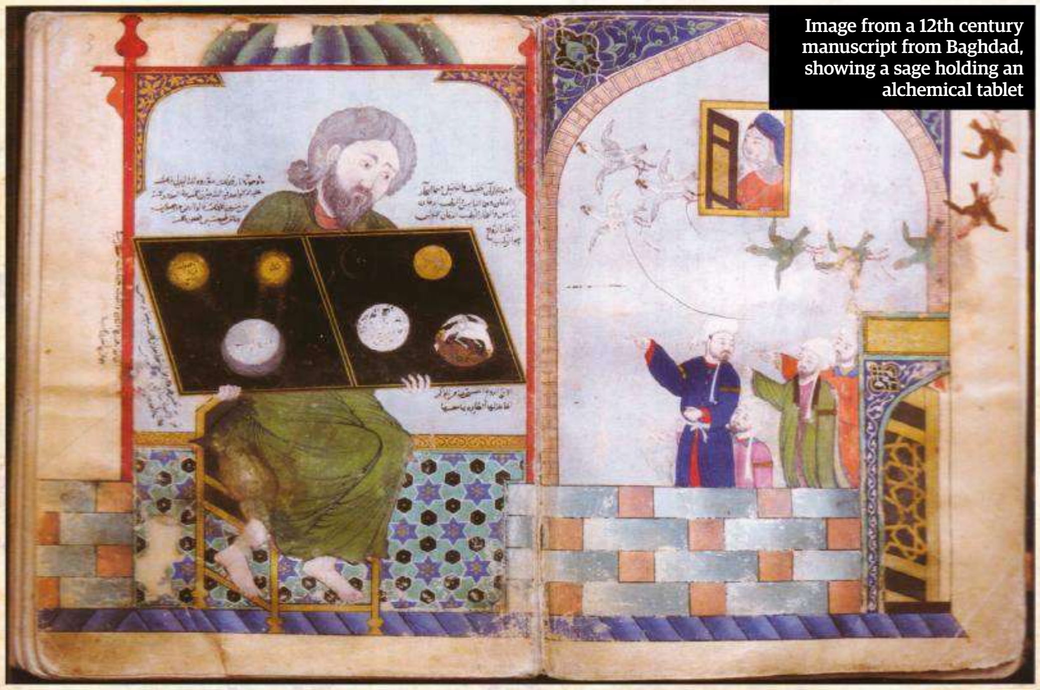
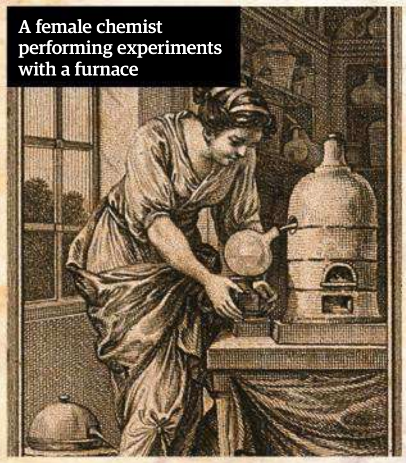
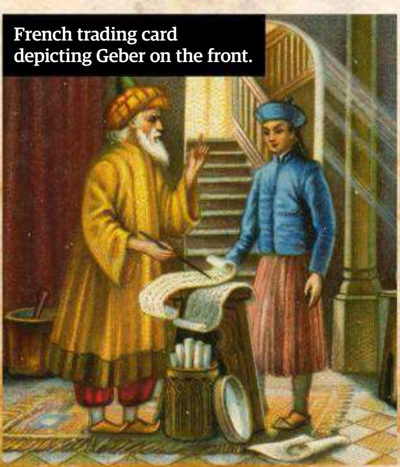


Image from a 12th century manuscript from Baghdad, showing a sage holding an alchemical tablet

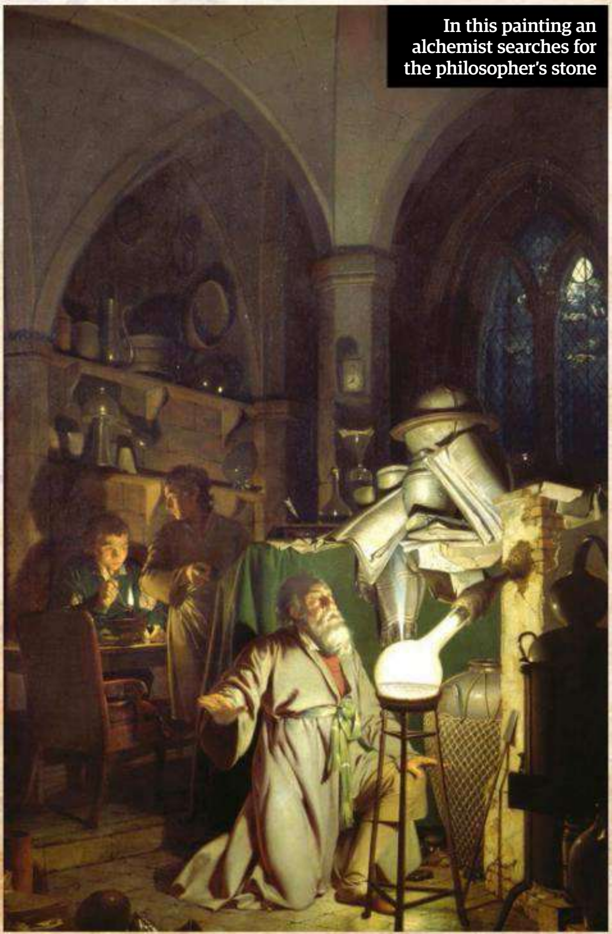
> "The origins of alchemy can be traced back 2,000 years before Newton to the Ancient Egyptians and Greeks"



A female chemist performing experiments with a furnace



French trading card depicting Geber on the front.



In this painting an alchemist searches for the philosopher's stone

Over time, the experience of working with gold, silver and other metals led the most talented craftsmen to develop impressive alloys. Eventually, many different types of 'gold' entered the market, with major economic consequences as the manipulated metals and alloys were not in fact gold, but convincing fakes. By the time the Romans controlled Egypt, counterfeit gold had become such a problem that the Roman Emperor Diocletian (reigning between 284-305) ordered for the destruction of every single text that covered the making of gold or other metalwork.

The Greeks also played an important role in the early development of alchemy. However, these men were philosophers who were more often than not thinkers rather than doers, so their contribution was primarily focused on theories involving the nature of substances. The first alchemical documents were papyri written in Greek, often including processes and recipes in the creation of gold-like metals and alloys.

The teachings of Aristotle from the 4th century BCE made a profound impact on alchemical thought, as well as other Greek writers both before and after him. Yet it was not until Zosimos of Panopolis, who thrived c.300, that numerous alchemical texts began to emerge, which differed from the earlier papyri. In the writings of Zosimos, the practice of alchemy became less straightforward and more vague. For instance, he began to speak in riddles and used phrases whose meaning is difficult to determine. Zosimos may have been one of the first alchemists to conceal his ideas through secrecy and symbolism, but he started a tradition that later became central to the alchemical world.

After the fall of the Western Roman Empire in the 5th century, the Islamic conquests made the Arabic civilisation one of the chief powers of the world. In this golden age of Islamic culture, Arabic scholars worked diligently to translate earlier Greco-Roman texts and assimilate as much of their ancient knowledge as possible. Especially after Egypt fell under Arabic control, documents that covered alchemy were also discovered and incorporated into the works of the early Islamic scholars. It is often thought that the term 'alchemy' was actually created in this period, because it combined the word Khem with the Arabic definite article al-, such as in the words alcohol and algebra. Furthermore, the key to immortality – which was just as important to alchemists as gold creation – is known as the elixir of life, from the Arabic word 'al-iksir'.

The most prominent Arabic alchemist was Jábir ibn Háyyan, or Geber to western Europeans, of

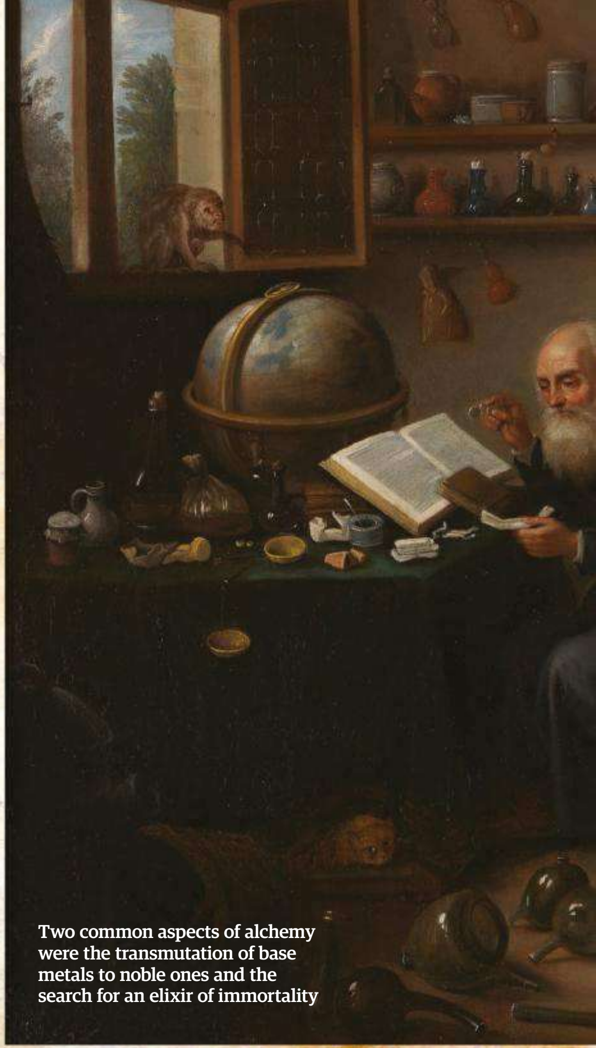
c.760. From the writings of Aristotle, Geber theorised that metals were created from a combination of mercury and sulphur, which became a fundamental aspect of alchemy.

After Geber, the physician and philosopher Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Zakariyya Al-Razi (or Rasis) dealt with alchemy during the 9th century, followed by Abu Ali ibn Sina (or Avicenna) in the 10th century. Once the works of these men and other Arabic scholars reached the Latin west, interest in alchemy was reignited throughout Medieval Europe.

Albertus Magnus, a Dominican from Swabia, was the primary scholar responsible for reintroducing alchemy to Europe in the 13th century. Albertus supported the mercury-sulphur theory of Geber, and although he believed that transmutation (the changing of matter into another form) was possible, he admitted it was very difficult to do. In 1244-5, Thomas Aquinas became the pupil of Albertus, and the master taught him what he knew, including his knowledge of alchemy. The other major alchemist of the 13th century, Roger Bacon, wrote about two different kinds: practical and theoretical. Bacon praised the first type for he truly believed that, if done right, the processes could improve metals and make them better than the state in which they are found in nature.

Albertus, Bacon and the other prominent alchemists of the era all believed that transmutation could be achieved, especially with metals. However, none of them could prove it. It was during this time that the philosopher's stone began to increasingly appear within alchemical texts. Since transmutation was possible according to the alchemists, many began to believe that they simply lacked one vital ingredient to make the process work, which was the stone. And as the idea of the stone became more popular, so too did the alchemical texts become increasingly more difficult to interpret, as riddles, symbolism and coded language became more and more prevalent.

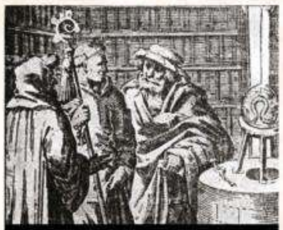
It is basically impossible to know exactly what the philosopher's stone was, or would have been, because there have been so many different theories written about the substance. Some alchemists believed that the stone was comprised of the old



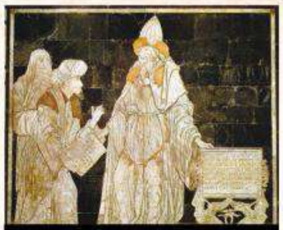
Two common aspects of alchemy were the transmutation of base metals to noble ones and the search for an elixir of immortality

Legendary alchemists

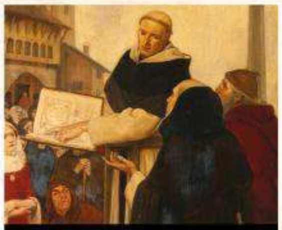
The major figures of alchemy from the ancient world to the Renaissance



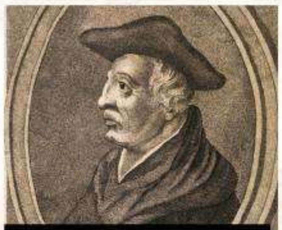
Thomas Norton with Abbot Cremer and Basil Valentine



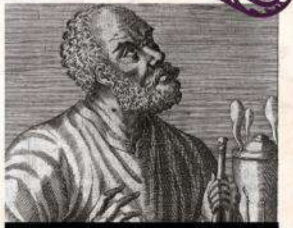
15th-century depiction of Hermes Trismegistus



Albertus Magnus describing his scientific theories to others



18th-century portrait engraving of Roger Bacon



Depiction of the Arabian alchemist Jábir ibn Háyyan

Thomas Norton

Thomas Norton, who lived from c.1433-1513, was the disciple of another famous English alchemist called George Ripley. As an alchemist, Thomas was supposedly successful in creating the elixir of life not once but twice, only to have it stolen from him on both occasions; however, he is most well-known as an alchemist for writing the *Ordinal Of Alchemy*.

Hermes Trismegistus

Hermes Trismegistus is often considered to be the founder of ancient alchemy. Although he was most likely a mythical figure, he was believed by many to have lived at the same time as Moses. Other theories about his mysterious origins depict him as a god descended from the Greek god known as Hermes. The early 14th century treatise *De Mineralibus*, attributed to Albertus Magnus, is the first Western text to mention him.

Albertus Magnus

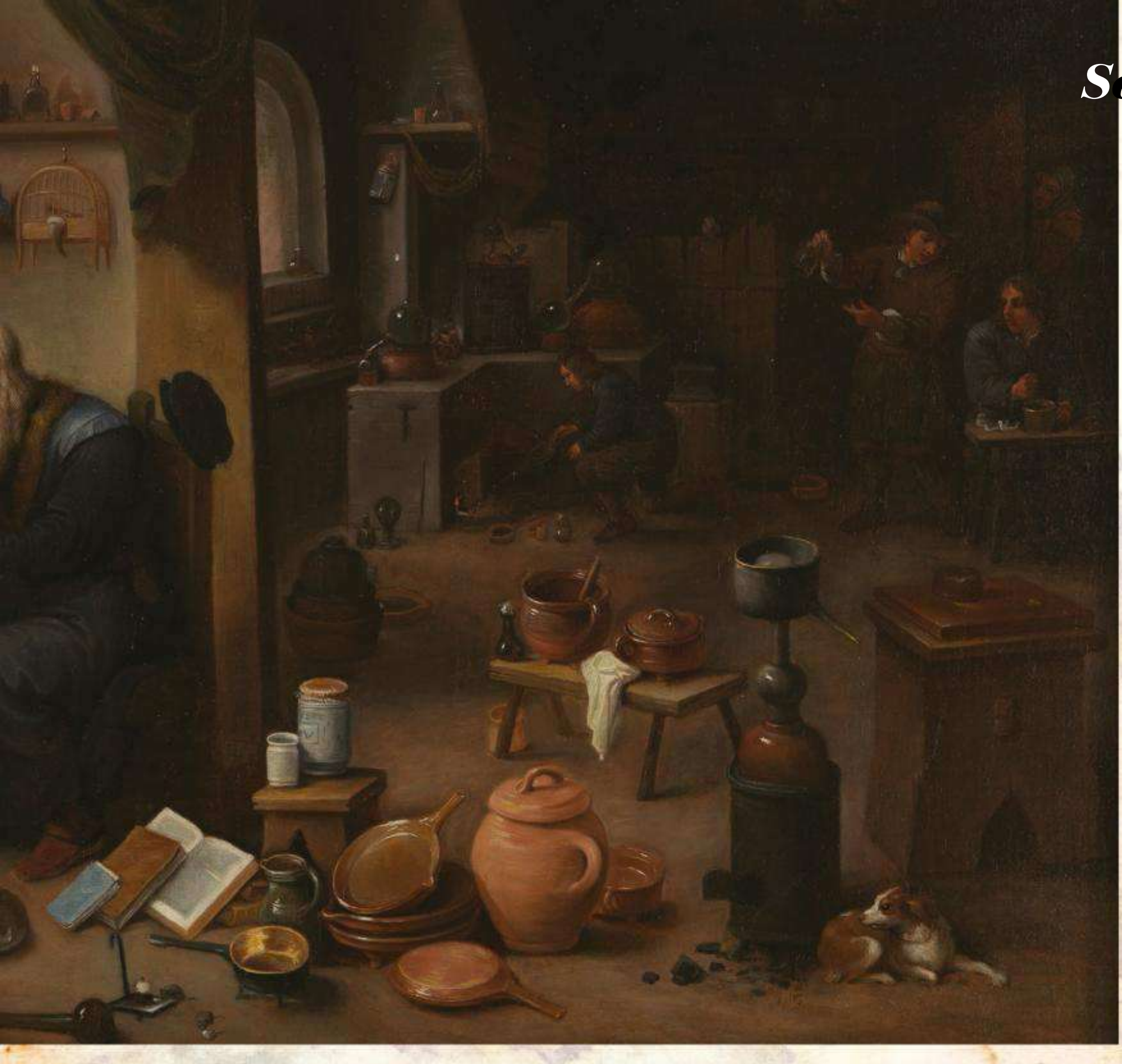
Born at the beginning of the 13th century, Albertus Magnus was a Dominican who was given the title of Doctor Universalis by the Catholic Church, as he was the most prominent scholar of his time in the natural sciences. He was considered to be a theologian, inventor, astrologer and magician, but known to later alchemists as chief expert in alchemy during the early Medieval era. Outside of alchemy, Albertus gained fame as the teacher of St Thomas Aquinas.

Roger Bacon

A Franciscan, Roger Bacon was also the first Englishman of any renown to study and practise alchemy. A contemporary of Albertus, Bacon lived from c.1220-1292 and was known as a magician and miracle-worker, but he was also a major supporter of pure experimentation, and wanted to improve upon the scientific methods of the time. Works attributed to Bacon were some of the first to lead alchemists on the quest for the philosopher's stone.

'Geber' or Jábir ibn Háyyan

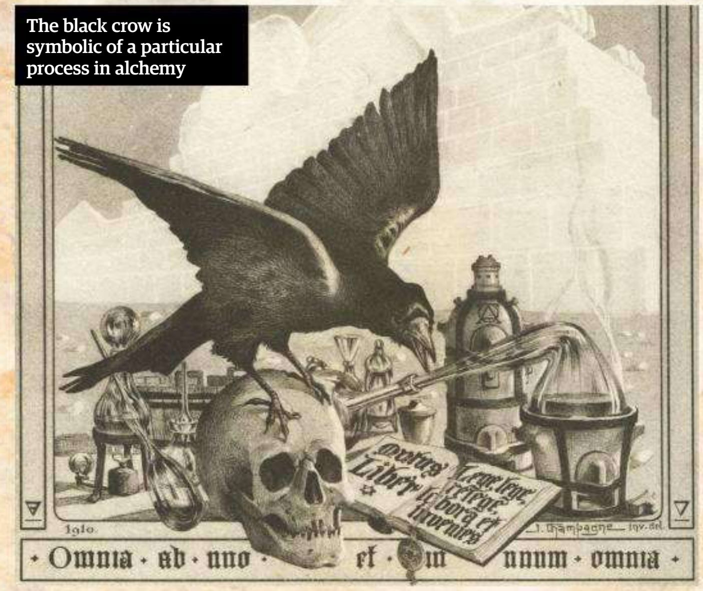
Known by Latin speakers of the west as Geber, many works on alchemy were attributed to Jábir ibn Háyyan. It is possible that he lived during the 8th century when the Arabs were discovering and translating ancient Greco-Roman texts, therefore he contributed to this. His work the *Summa Perfectionis Magisterii* was the primary source of information on chemicals for most of Medieval Europe, but it may have been the work of another alchemist.



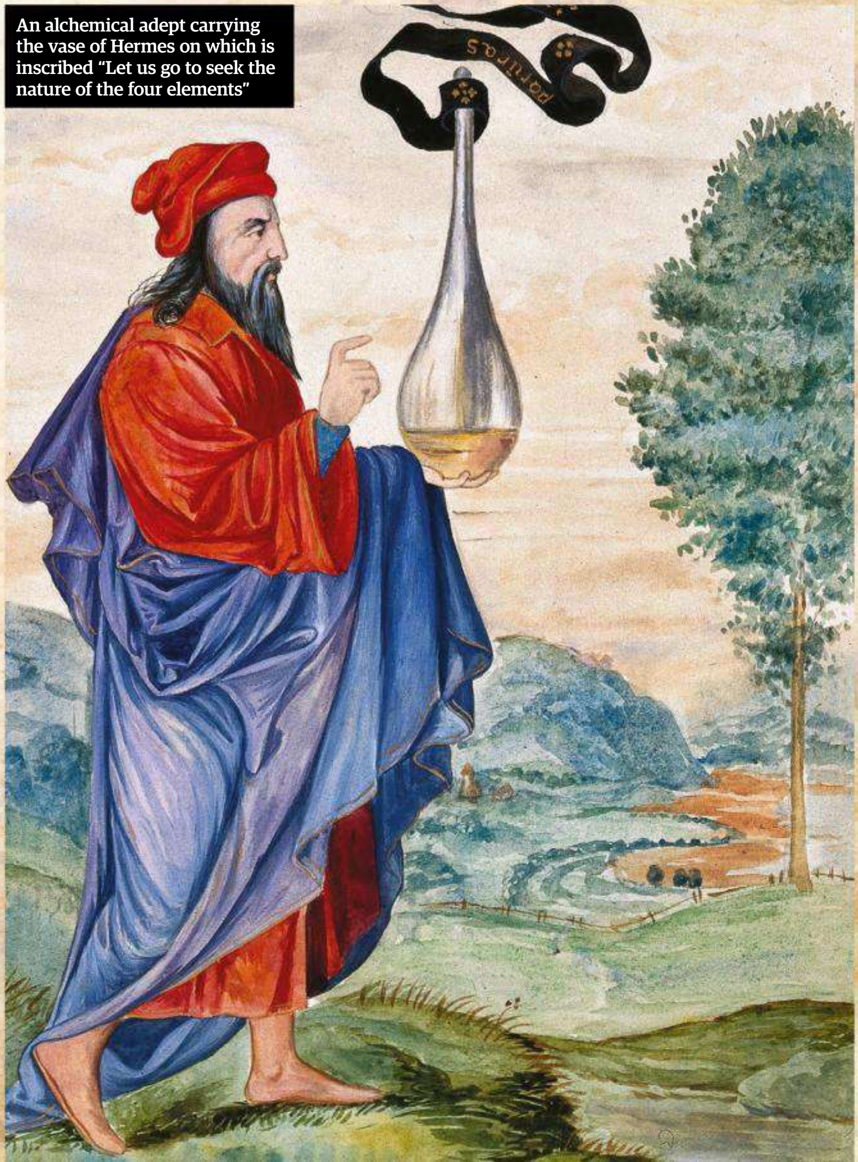
common alchemical ingredients of mercury and sulphur, along with the new addition of salt, but with one major twist; these components were not just simply mercury, sulphur and salt, but rather special substances in a pure state with magical qualities, commonly referred to as the 'essences' of mercury, sulphur and salt.

There were other theories about the makeup of the stone, too. Similar to Newton's idea of the 'vegetable spirit', some alchemists thought of the philosopher's stone as the seed of gold that could be obtained from the metal. To the Medieval mind, metals were similar to vegetation, in that they both grew in the earth. Therefore, metals had seeds and the most precious seed of all was that of gold.

Regardless of the increasing secrecy surrounding alchemy, hundreds of alchemists from many different backgrounds were desperate to find or manufacture whatever was necessary in order to obtain the philosopher's stone. Since the incredible substance could be used to serve the purpose of creating gold and the elixir of life, some alchemists sought enormous wealth, some desired fame, and others wanted the key to never-ending life, while

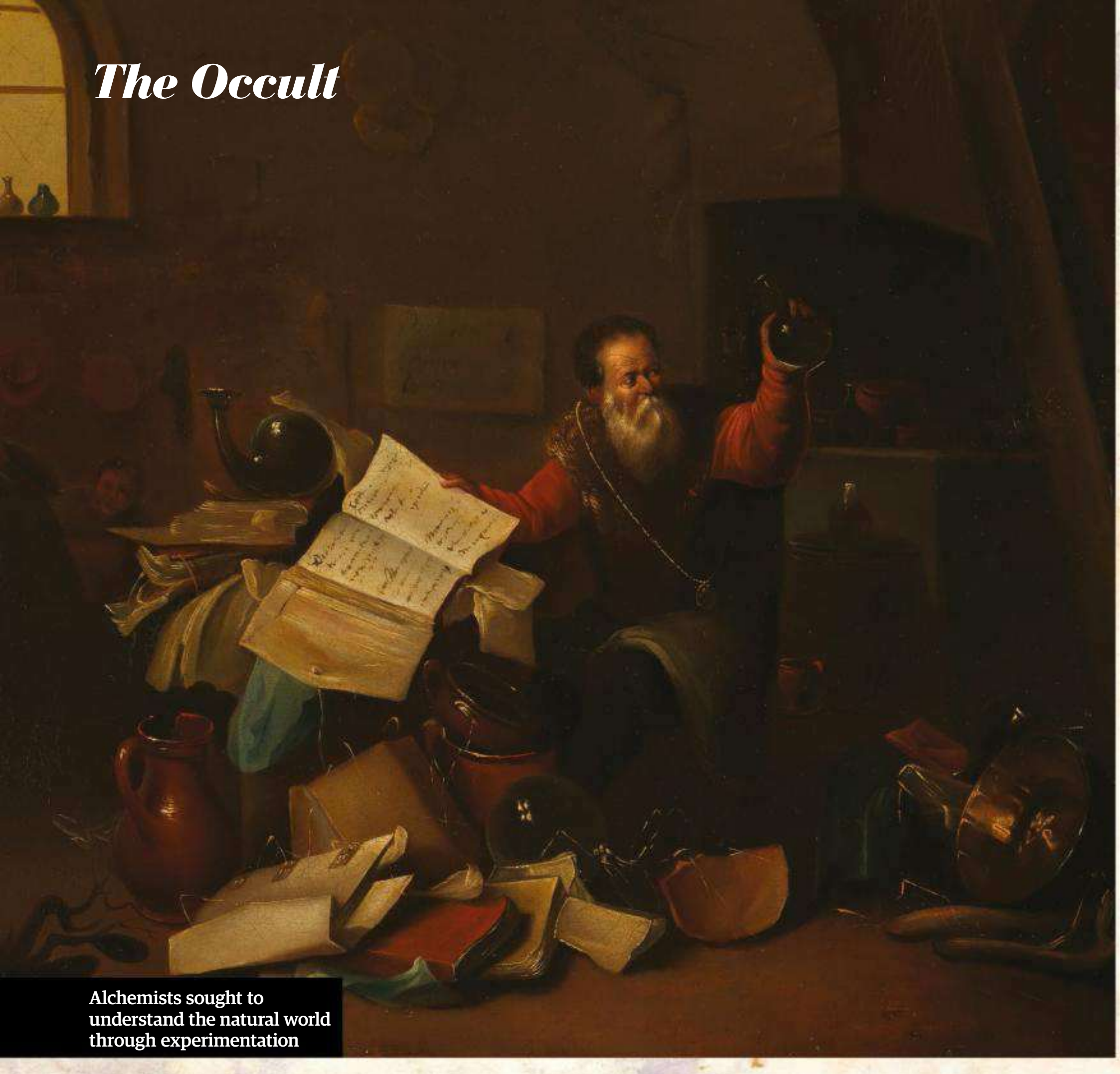

Omnia · ab · uno · et · in · unum · omnia

The black crow is symbolic of a particular process in alchemy



An alchemical adept carrying the vase of Hermes on which is inscribed "Let us go to seek the nature of the four elements"

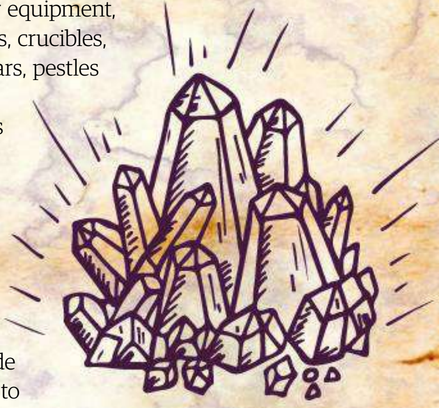
> *"These components were special substances in a pure state with magical qualities"*



Alchemists sought to understand the natural world through experimentation

there were some who had the grand aspirations of flooding the market with so much gold that the economic system would collapse and the world would be turned upside down. There were those who did gain fame or notoriety for their alchemical exploits, yet all of the other dreams were never fulfilled. In the end, the failures of others did not stop the alchemists, especially at a time when the supposed success stories achieved a legendary status that carried a lot more weight than the numerous average practitioners who simply faded into obscurity over time after years without success.

The Medieval alchemists who still focused on the quest either attempted to interpret the substantial corpus of texts, or conducted their own experiments in a laboratory. The heating of metals and other substances was a fundamental part of their work; therefore, the furnace was the core to the alchemist's laboratory. This work area was also filled with many different types of utensils, tools and other equipment, such as beakers, crucibles, flasks, phials, jars, pestles and mortars, ladles, strainers and filters. As the alchemists worked hard in order to achieve their impossible goals, they constantly made improvements to

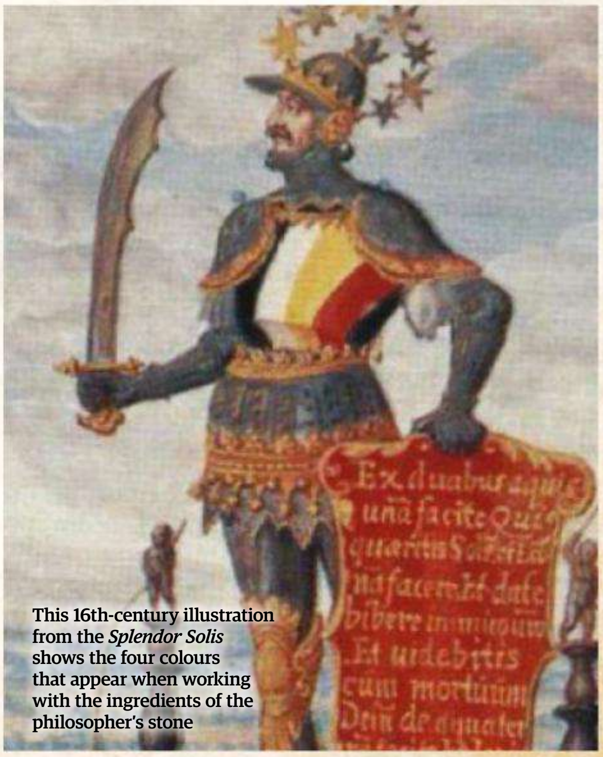


> "There were those who did gain fame or notoriety for their alchemical exploits"

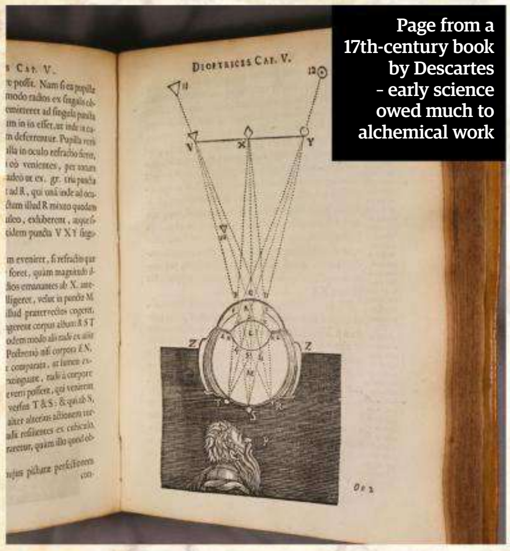
Materials and methods

For the practical alchemists, many different methods and a wide range of equipment were essential

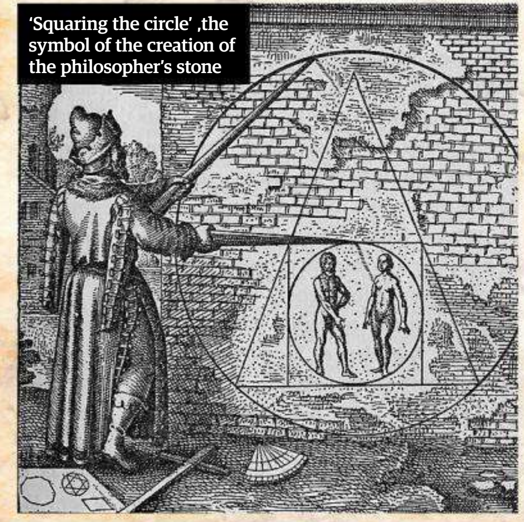
All alchemists frequently used their furnaces to heat metals and other substances, but they also literally tried to test every single other process they could think of, some of which seem quite absurd today. This was primarily due to their lack of understanding about the true nature of metals. For instance, Geber believed that matter could be changed into its perfect form by mixing it with a pure, perfect substance. Essentially, alchemists considered this method as the fermentation of gold by leavening it with base metals in order to achieve their goal. Other common processes used were pulverisation, solidification, distillation, sublimation, mortification and calcination. The furnace fire was used for methods like calcination, which broke down solid substances into powder, but heat was not always utilised. Alchemists distilled many different types of liquids in their experiments, such as vinegar, egg yolks and even horse manure. Acid was also commonly used in the laboratory to dissolve ingredients like silver and mercury. And outside of the laboratory, some alchemists hoped to achieve their goal by exposing their work to the Sun for long periods of time. Alchemists did acknowledge at times that there were limits to what they could accomplish. One example is that experts knew they could not simply change a dead thing into a living thing. On the other hand, alchemists did believe that if they returned the dead item into its original form as simple matter first, it was then possible for it to be changed into its opposite form (that is, living).



This 16th-century illustration from the *Splendor Solis* shows the four colours that appear when working with the ingredients of the philosopher's stone



Page from a 17th-century book by Descartes – early science owed much to alchemical work

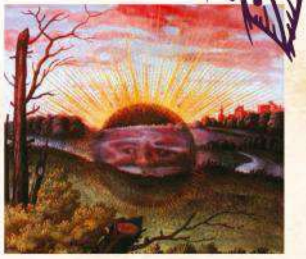


'Squaring the circle' ,the symbol of the creation of the philosopher's stone

Secrets and symbols

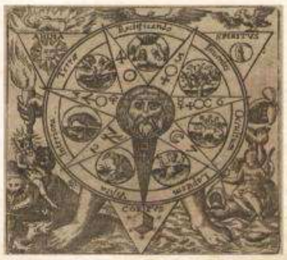
To ensure knowledge was kept from the unworthy, manuscripts were filled with symbols and codes

The Dark Sun



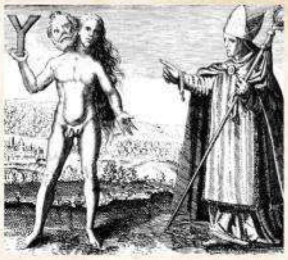
One of the lesser-known alchemical symbols, the Dark Sun, or sol niger, is symbolic of change, essential to the goals of transmutation that alchemists worked towards. It can also be linked to the blackening of matter, or even putrefaction. This image is from the *Splendor Solis*, a 16th-century German book of colourful watercolour images with symbolic significance, relating to alchemical processes and ideas. Though the images date from later in alchemy's Medieval history, their style is reminiscent of much earlier alchemical images.

The Four Elements

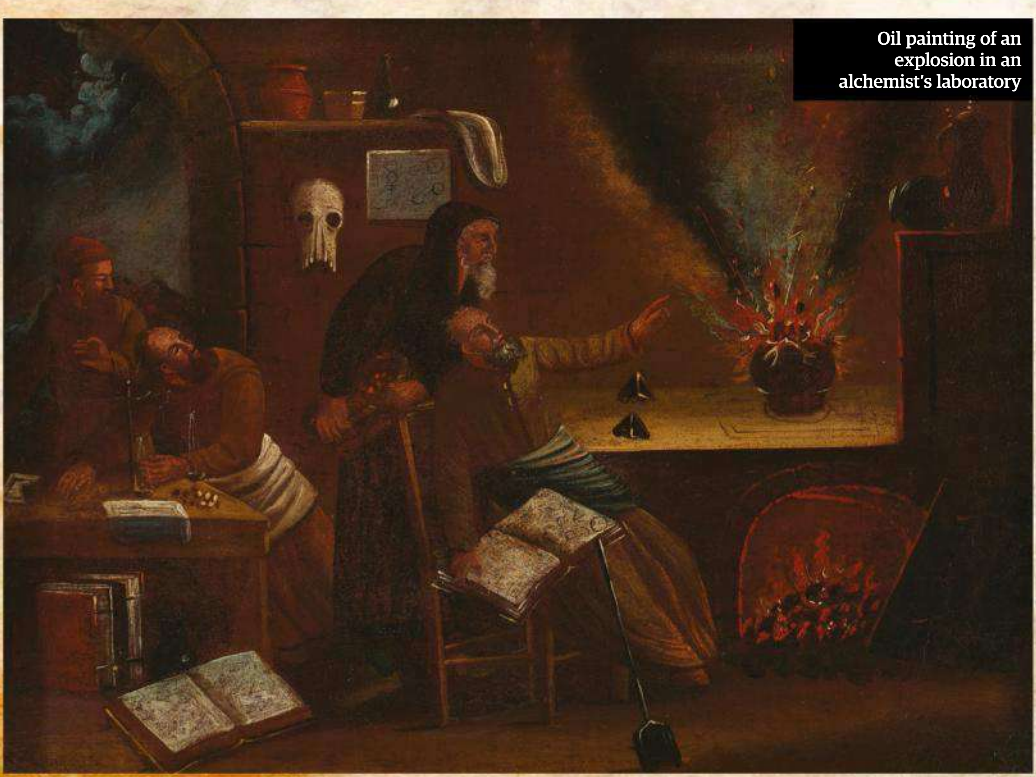


This symbolic emblem from the 17th century shows the four key elements – air, water, earth and fire – at its edges. Alchemists believed that if they could master the different aspects of the four elements, they could create whatever they wished to make, including gold and the elixir of life. The triangle within these corners symbolise the 'tria prima' or three primes, which were mercury, sulphur and salt. The alchemist Paracelsus believed that combinations of these three substances made up all metals.

The Great Hermaphrodite



An engraving from the 17th-century work *Symbola Aureae Mensae* by Michael Maier, which depicts Albertus Magnus pointing to the alchemical symbol of the hermaphrodite. The image expresses a common idea found in many alchemical texts that everything has both a uniting, singular nature, but is comprised of two parts. Alchemists believed that harmonisation of these opposing forces (such as wet and dry, Sun and Moon, male and female) could hold the key to the power of creation they sought. The hermaphrodite symbolises this union.



Oil painting of an explosion in an alchemist's laboratory

the various apparatus that they used. Centuries later, much of this same equipment was incredibly important to the first chemists, and could often be found in their laboratories as well.

Alchemy remained very popular and indeed respectable well into the Renaissance, with many other important individuals emerging on the scene, including Arnald of Villanova and Ramon Llull in the 13th century, George Ripley and Thomas Norton in the 15th century, and then Thomas Charnock in the 16th century, to name just a few. However, during the beginning of the early modern era, the art gradually began to lose its prestige.

Advancements in metallurgy that led to the discovery of the true nature of metals was one of the first causes, followed by many other scientific breakthroughs, which over time made so-called pseudo-sciences like alchemy and astrology obsolete. By the 17th century, Newton was at the forefront of this new scientific age, yet even a forward thinker such as him looked back upon and used the ancient knowledge of alchemy in order to uncover the secrets of life.

THE REAL DRACULA

VLAD THE IMPALER

Was the Medieval warlord a bloodthirsty psychopath or the saviour of Europe?

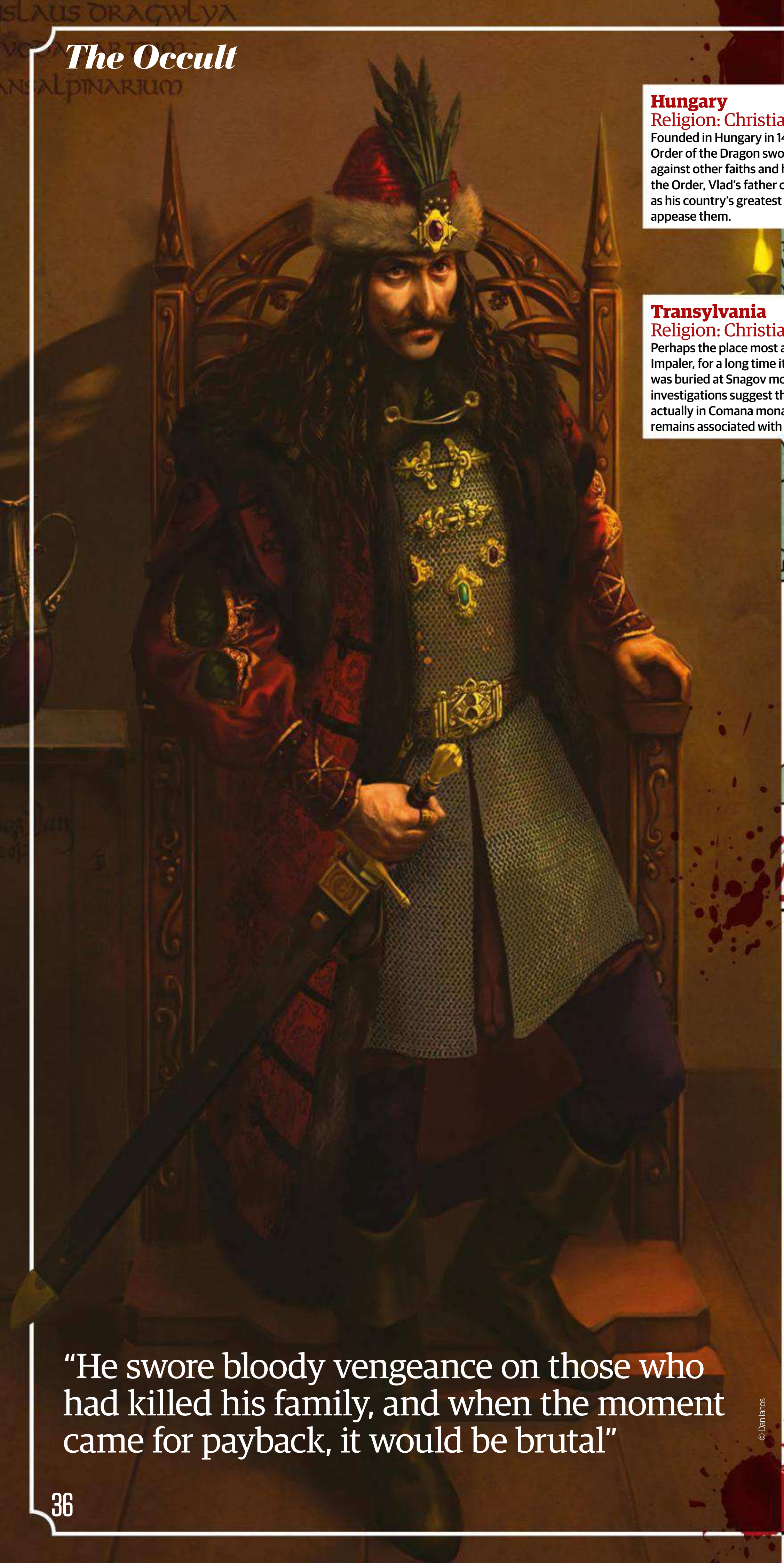
Romania's Medieval warlord is known by many names, all of them infamous. To some he is Vlad III, to others, Vlad Drăculea, while history has recorded him rather more notoriously as Vlad the Impaler and even, most famously of all, Dracula. It's a moniker that hints at his bloodlust and preferred method of execution: skewering his victims on stakes and leaving their rotting remains to line the forest. The famed 'forest of the impaled' served as a warning to the Turks, and these terror tactics allegedly frightened away an invading Ottoman army. Vlad was willing to go to extreme lengths to keep the lands that had taken years to bring under his control.

The infamous Impaler was also known to boil, burn and disembowel his enemies – and yet he was remembered by some as a national hero, an orthodox Christian who tried to stop the spread of Islam. It wasn't just the Turkish enemy that felt the wrath of the Balkan warlord, however. Any man, woman or child who committed a crime, from adultery to stealing, would be punished. As a test, Vlad placed a golden cup in the square of Târgoviște and no one dared to steal it throughout his reign. His fascinating story offers a glimpse back to a time of conflict, when one man could be a devil to some and a saviour to others.

Vlad the Impaler began his life in the deep winter of 1431. He was born to Vlad II Dracul, the soon-to-be voivode (prince) of Wallachia, but of his mother we know nothing certain. Perhaps she was Princess Cneajna of Moldavia, wife of Vlad II, or maybe she was one of the ruler's many mistresses. Whoever she was, she gave birth to a boy who would become one of the most terrifying rulers known to history.

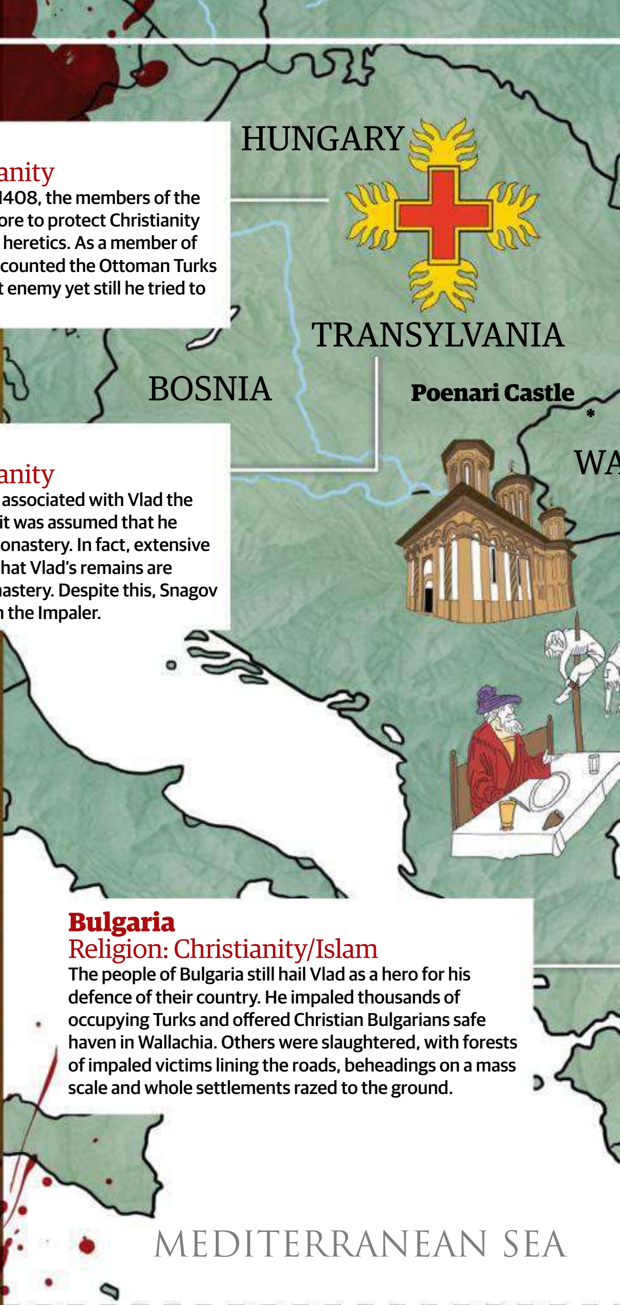
Vlad was born into a world of conflict and territorial disputes. He was raised to understand the importance of honouring his family name and forever pushing the limits of his lands, whatever the cost, to those who opposed him. As a member of the Order of the Dragon, his father was sworn to defend Christianity from the Ottomans and any others who did not share their faith. It was a vow that Vlad himself would also defend as he slashed and burned a bloody swathe through the Balkans.

Illustration: Jean-Michel



“He swore bloody vengeance on those who had killed his family, and when the moment came for payback, it would be brutal”

© Dan Ianos



Hungary
Religion: Christianity
Founded in Hungary in 1408, the members of the Order of the Dragon swore to protect Christianity against other faiths and heretics. As a member of the Order, Vlad's father counted the Ottoman Turks as his country's greatest enemy yet still he tried to appease them.

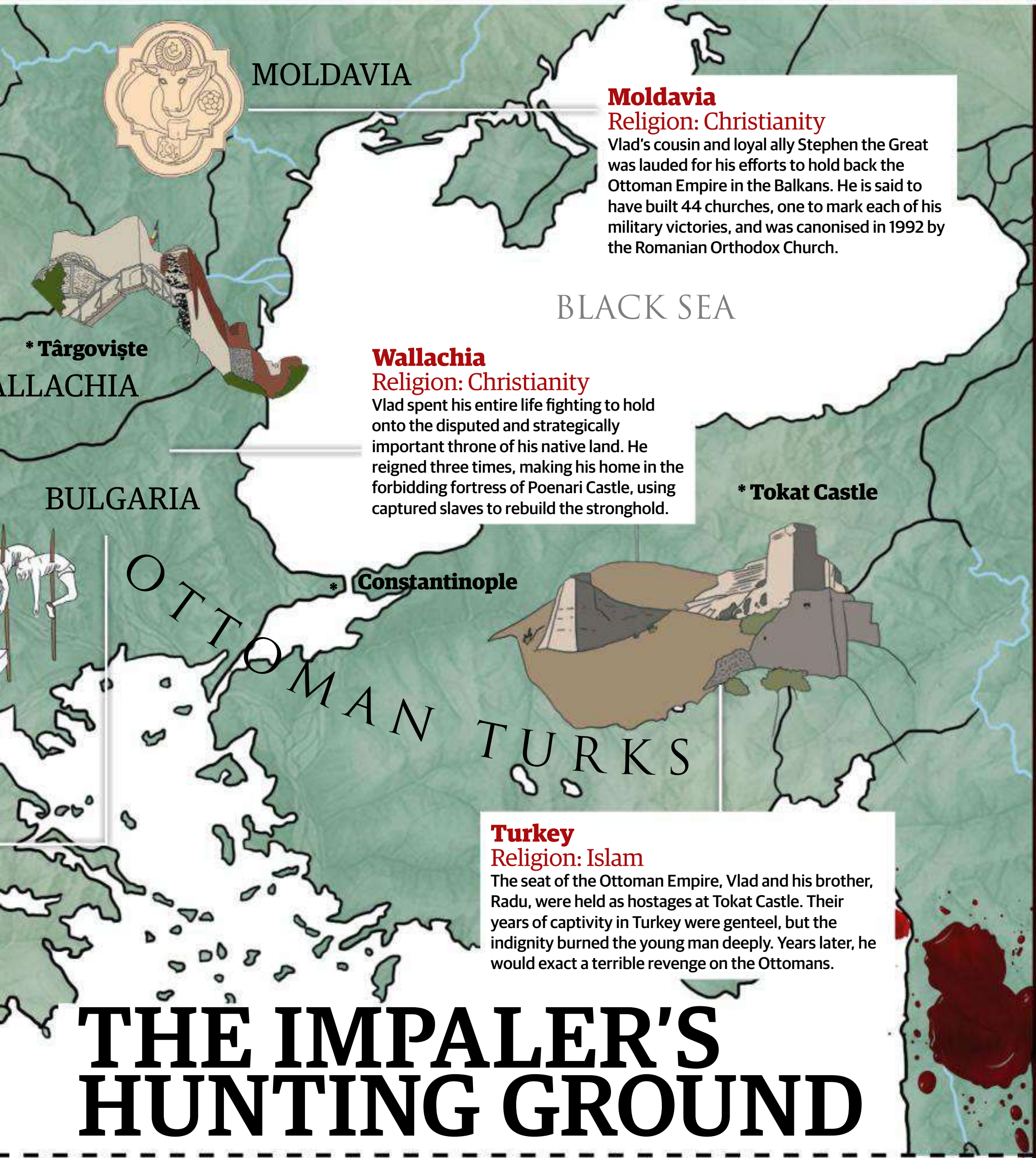
Transylvania
Religion: Christianity
Perhaps the place most associated with Vlad the Impaler, for a long time it was assumed that he was buried at Snagov monastery. In fact, extensive investigations suggest that Vlad's remains are actually in Comana monastery. Despite this, Snagov remains associated with the Impaler.

Bulgaria
Religion: Christianity/Islam
The people of Bulgaria still hail Vlad as a hero for his defence of their country. He impaled thousands of occupying Turks and offered Christian Bulgarians safe haven in Wallachia. Others were slaughtered, with forests of impaled victims lining the roads, beheadings on a mass scale and whole settlements razed to the ground.

When Vlad was five years old, his father was crowned voivode of Wallachia. However, he lost the throne six years later and, in his attempts to secure his return to power, tried to keep on the best side of all the important parties. At first things went well, and Vlad and his brother, Radu, were stationed at the Ottoman court to prove the voivode's loyalty in exchange for Ottoman support. When the Order of the Dragon demanded that Vlad II Dracul join their crusade against the Turks, however, it seemed that his wily efforts to remain on the good side of everyone had failed.

The brothers became prisoners, but despite being held hostage, their lives were comfortable and privileged. Vlad and Radu were given a fine academic education, as well as training in combat, strategy and military matters. However, the very thought of being held captive left Vlad seething with resentment and that only worsened as he watched his younger brother, Radu, become a favourite of the Ottoman sultan and eventually convert to Islam.

Vlad, on the other hand, never liked to toe the line and was often severely punished for his transgressions. When news reached Vlad that his father and elder brother, Mircea, had been brutally



Moldavia
Religion: Christianity
Vlad's cousin and loyal ally Stephen the Great was lauded for his efforts to hold back the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans. He is said to have built 44 churches, one to mark each of his military victories, and was canonised in 1992 by the Romanian Orthodox Church.

Wallachia
Religion: Christianity
Vlad spent his entire life fighting to hold onto the disputed and strategically important throne of his native land. He reigned three times, making his home in the forbidding fortress of Poenari Castle, using captured slaves to rebuild the stronghold.

Turkey
Religion: Islam
The seat of the Ottoman Empire, Vlad and his brother, Radu, were held as hostages at Tokat Castle. Their years of captivity in Turkey were genteel, but the indignity burned the young man deeply. Years later, he would exact a terrible revenge on the Ottomans.

THE IMPALER'S HUNTING GROUND

murdered by rebel nobles in 1447, that resentment burst into fury. He swore bloody vengeance on those who had killed his family, and when the moment came for payback, it would be brutal.

Upon his release, Vlad returned to Wallachia as Vlad III and, aged just 17, claimed the throne that his father had lost. He hung onto it for just two months before John Hunyadi - better known as the White Knight of Hungary, and a sworn enemy of Vlad's family - invaded Wallachia. Vlad was forced to flee to Moldavia, seeking protection from his uncle, Prince Bogdan, and his cousin, Stephen - a man who would later become a vital figure in the story of the Impaler.

However, things had taken an unexpected turn in Wallachia, where Hunyadi's preferred candidate for the role of voivode, Vladislav II, had turned out to be rather fond of appeasing the Turks. Hunyadi might not have approved of Vlad, but the two men formed an unlikely alliance, plotting to take back the throne of Wallachia. The decision came not a moment too soon.

In 1453, Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Turks and suddenly the doors of Europe were wide open for invasion. Now the retaking of Wallachia was more important than ever and, in 1456, as Hunyadi's troops invaded Serbia, Vlad led his men into Wallachia. The two men met very different fates: Hunyadi fell victim to plague and died, while Vlad triumphed and slaughtered Vladislav II. It marked the beginning of six violent years of rule as voivode of Wallachia, and the start of a legacy written in blood.

Safely installed on the throne of Wallachia, Vlad immediately began to consolidate his position. He sent thousands of troops to fight on behalf of his cousin, Stephen, and ensure that he was successful in conquering Moldavia. The two cousins now controlled strategically important points in the Balkans, and together would prove an enormous obstacle to the Ottomans. Vlad couldn't help but think back to his youth. No matter how good the education he had enjoyed in captivity, he had still been a hostage, and now the time had come for revenge.

Intelligence reached Vlad that included the names of many Wallachian nobles, or boyars, who had conspired to murder his father and bury his brother, Mircea, alive. Cunning as ever, he invited the men named to attend an Easter feast and bring their families along to enjoy the festivities.

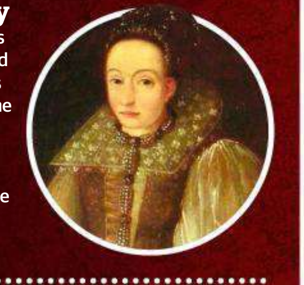
BLOODY RULERS

Vlad the Impaler isn't alone in ruling with an iron fist - history is full of merciless monarchs and deadly dictators

Gilles de Rais

Born in 1405, Baron de Rais was one of the most prolific child killers in history, revelling in abuse and torture. The number of his victims is unknown but is believed to be more than 100. De Rais was executed in 1440; none of his victims were ever found.

Elizabeth Bathory



Known by some as Countess Dracula, Bathory was alleged to have murdered hundreds of young women at her home in Hungary, but escaped execution. Locked up in a castle room with just small hatches to pass her food, she died in 1614.

Attila the Hun

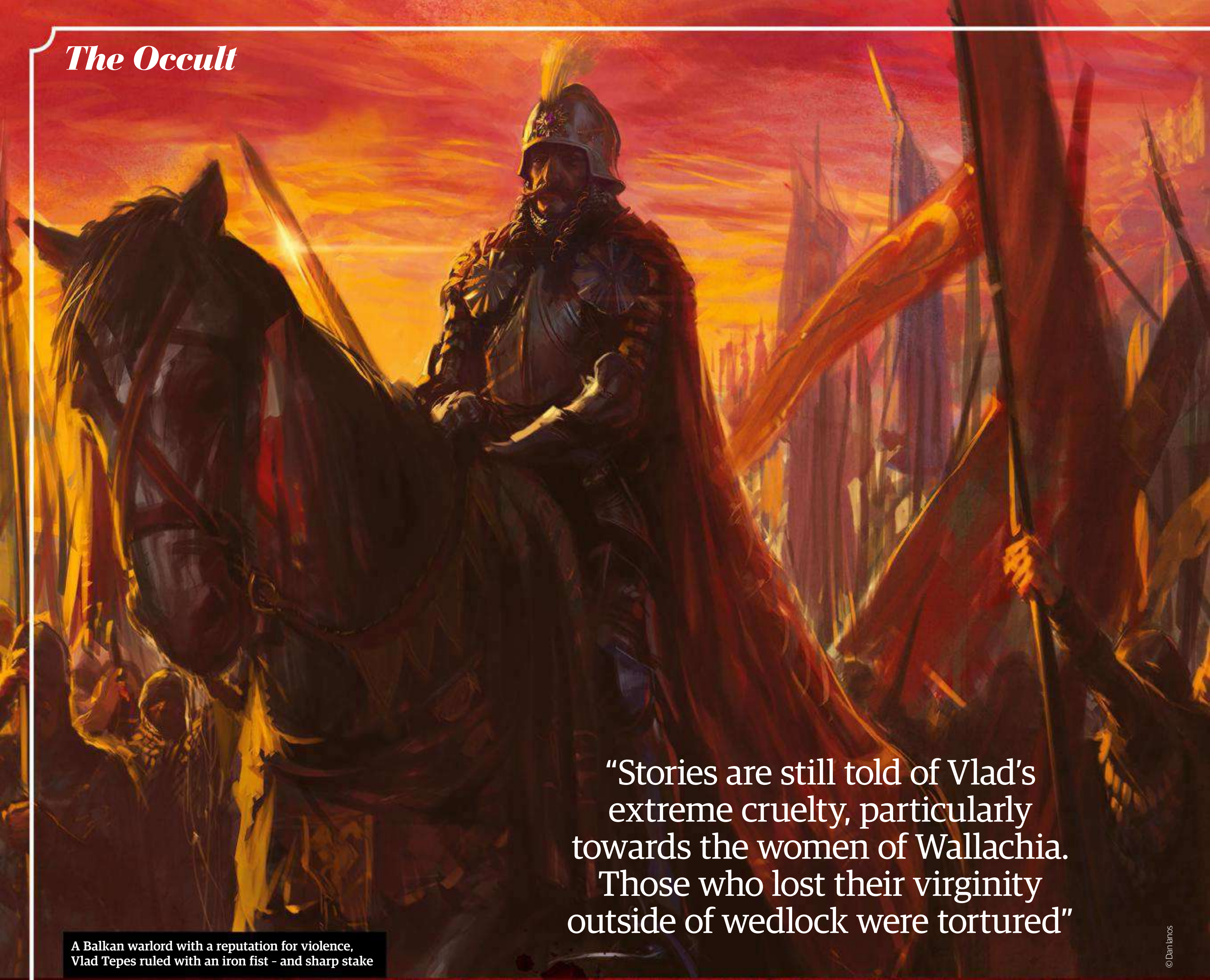
The Scourge of God, Attila laid waste to dozens of cities. Known for his savagery, he spared no one, and fear of him swept through the continent. Attila died at his own wedding feast, choking to death from either an enormous nosebleed or internal bleeding.

Ivan the Terrible

The 16th-century tsar of Russia found personal delight in sadism, and took pleasure in both inflicting and observing torture. He impaled, boiled, burned, beheaded or hanged hundreds of victims, and these were just a few of his more sinister methods.

Catherine de Medici

The devout Catholic is infamous for orchestrating the St Bartholomew's Day massacre. As Protestant crowds gathered in Paris to witness the marriage of her daughter to Henry of Navarre in 1572, an estimated 3,000 were slaughtered.



A Balkan warlord with a reputation for violence, Vlad Tepes ruled with an iron fist - and sharp stake

> "Stories are still told of Vlad's extreme cruelty, particularly towards the women of Wallachia. Those who lost their virginity outside of wedlock were tortured"

© Dan Ianos

VLAD VERSUS THE TRANSYLVANIAN SAXONS

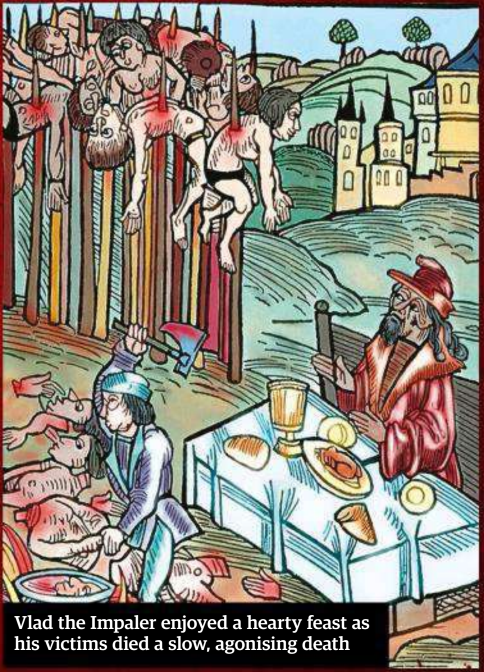
The conflict that gave birth to the dark prince's name

The influential Transylvanian Saxons were long-time critics of Vlad the Impaler; unsurprisingly, he exacted a terrible fate on them as punishment for their opposition. Although the Saxons were a minority in Transylvania, they were extremely powerful, controlling the region's fortified towns and its industry. For centuries they had been afforded special status under the Hungarian crown, but when Vlad came to power, all of that was set to change.

The Transylvanian Saxons disputed Vlad's claim to the throne of neighbouring Wallachia and chose to support his enemy, Dan III of Transylvania. Not only that, but they also enjoyed trade privileges that the Wallachian merchants did not, so when Vlad levied heavy taxes on the Saxons, they refused to pay. This continued until 1459 when Vlad's forces swept into the city of Kronstadt (known today as Braşov) and dragged the merchants up to Mount Tampa.

Here, on the hills overlooking the city, those who had dared defy their ruler met a gruesome fate. A stake was pushed into the anus of each victim, so that their own weight would slowly force them to slide down its length. It was an agonisingly slow death, and the hellish moans of the dying echoed over the city. The pretender Dan III was captured and forced to dig his own grave. Only when the pit was deep enough for a body was he allowed to rest, and then ordered to recite his own eulogy. As the final words left Dan's lips, Vlad beheaded him.

Legend has it that Vlad the Impaler dined royally amid the forest of dying Saxons, enjoying a banquet as the screams of the victims filled the air. German reports of the atrocities claimed that he dipped his bread into the blood of the Transylvanian Saxons. This is one of the first references to link Vlad Tepes with the vampiric legends that later attached themselves to his name.

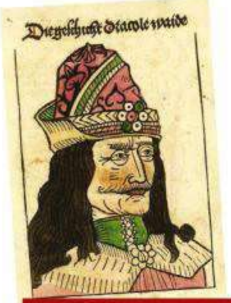


Vlad the Impaler enjoyed a hearty feast as his victims died a slow, agonising death

When they arrived, the boyars were arrested. The oldest were impaled on the spot; the young and fit, however, were forced into slave labour rebuilding Vlad's castle. Conditions were brutal, and those that survived the gruelling work were slaughtered once the project was completed.

Stories are still told of Vlad's extreme cruelty, particularly towards the women of Wallachia. Those who lost their virginity outside of wedlock were tortured, while children were roasted alive and then fed to their mothers. Dishonest shopkeepers were skewered and one of his enemies was even sawn in half. Some claim that Vlad impaled mice and birds for recreation, but much of this is open to conjecture. Such tales can serve both good and bad purposes. On the one hand, they do much to instil fear in the enemy or any would-be invader. On the other, they tend to obscure the facts.

Not all of the stories were rumours, of course. When Sultan Mehmed II claimed Wallachia as part of the Ottoman Empire, Vlad had no intention of acquiescing to him. He did, however, welcome the Turkish envoys to his court, suggesting that he might be open to negotiation. Instead, the envoys were seized and their turbans nailed to their heads, killing them instantly. After all, Vlad pointed out, it was impolite to refuse to raise one's headgear when meeting the prince.



In Germany, pamphlets were published that told tales of Vlad's wicked deeds in lurid, gruesome detail

The sultan was furious and dispatched a trusted envoy, Hamza Bey, to seek an audience with Vlad. Bey's instructions were clear: claim Wallachia for the Ottoman Empire by any means, even if that included killing the intransigent ruler. Vlad was waiting to receive Bey and his men and, as they travelled through rural Wallachia, they were ambushed. The soldiers were impaled on wooden spikes; in deference to his importance, Hamza Bey was impaled on the tallest of them all.

Wherever Vlad the Impaler trod, bloodshed followed by the gallon. His hatred for the Ottoman Turks knew no bounds and it wasn't enough for him to know that his enemies were falling, he wanted to be there to kill them in person. Putting to good use the Turkish he had learned during captivity, Vlad infiltrated Ottoman strongholds across Bulgaria. His forces slaughtered thousands of men, women and children, killing civilians as readily as they did soldiers. The lands echoed with the cries of the wounded and dying, the air became thick with the smoke of burning villages and the people trembled at the advance of the Impaler.

With his empire in the Balkans sinking slowly beneath the blood of Vlad's victims, Sultan Mehmed II struck back. Long since converted to Islam, Radu the Handsome, the brother imprisoned alongside Vlad, joined the 90,000 Ottoman soldiers who crossed the Danube in 1462 and marched on Wallachia. Vlad, however, did not meet his attackers head on, but travelled by night, ambushing groups and picking them off a few thousand at a time, chipping away at men and morale. He knew his territory intimately and exploited this knowledge, catching the invaders in passes and gorges, his deadly strikes coming without warning.

The king of Hungary, Matthius Corvinus, however, did not rally to support Vlad, though he had in the past. The son of Hunyadi still viewed the Impaler with a suspicious eye, and when the seemingly endless Turkish push continued, Vlad turned to Corvinus for help. Instead, Corvinus, nursing ambitions of his own, had Vlad thrown in jail. For four years he languished in captivity, yet the cunning Impaler was not about to be beaten.

Upon his release in 1474, Vlad engaged the assistance of Stephen V Bathory of Transylvania and the two men successfully reclaimed his throne. However, as he embarked on his third reign, the Ottomans were determined to put an end to his rule. The Turks bided their time until Vlad began to think himself safe then, as he travelled through the countryside in the closing days of 1476, they struck.

With forces spent after the recent struggle to reclaim Wallachia, Vlad had little time to regroup and faced the massed Ottoman forces with just a few thousand men. Just as the circumstances of his birth are lost, so do stories disagree on how this warlord perished. Some claim that he died a hero, fighting fiercely alongside his loyal retainers, others say he was murdered by traitorous boyars. Yet another report has Vlad's head severed by the Turks and paraded on a stake. No one knows for sure the location of his final resting place, but it's most likely to be in the Comana Monastery in Giurgiu County, an order that the Impaler founded.

Centuries after his death, those forests of corpses still hold a gruesome fascination, and even today, he enjoys a conflicted reputation. Perhaps our modern perception found its genesis not in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* but in the German writings that related his deeds in blood-soaked detail, slavishly listing every act of cruelty, real or imagined. These illustrated pamphlets sold in their hundreds and were carried throughout Europe, spreading the tale of the merciless voivode. Soon these pamphlets had grown into a whole series and the public lapped them up, horrified and captivated.

It is perhaps unsurprising that, the closer to Vlad's homeland one gets, the more lauded he is. In Romania, he is a hero. Perceived as a god-fearing defender of the people, the Impaler is an important national figure, the man who stood alone between Christianity and the march of the Ottoman forces.

At around 600 years after his death, the tale of Vlad III has not faded. Immortalised in film, literature and fairy tales, the shadow of Vlad the Impaler and those who died at his hand continues to loom large.

FROM PRINCE OF WALLACHIA TO PRINCE OF DARKNESS

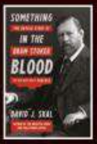
Cultural historian David J Skal looks at the links between Dracula and his historical namesake

Of all the misconceptions about Bram Stoker and Dracula, perhaps the most widespread is the belief that Stoker was inspired to write his classic horror story by the true-life exploits of Vlad Tepes. The sobriquet descended from Vlad's particularly bloodthirsty method of dispatching enemies. But in his own time, Vlad was known and feared as Dracula, meaning son of the devil, or dragon (the words are equivalent in Romanian).

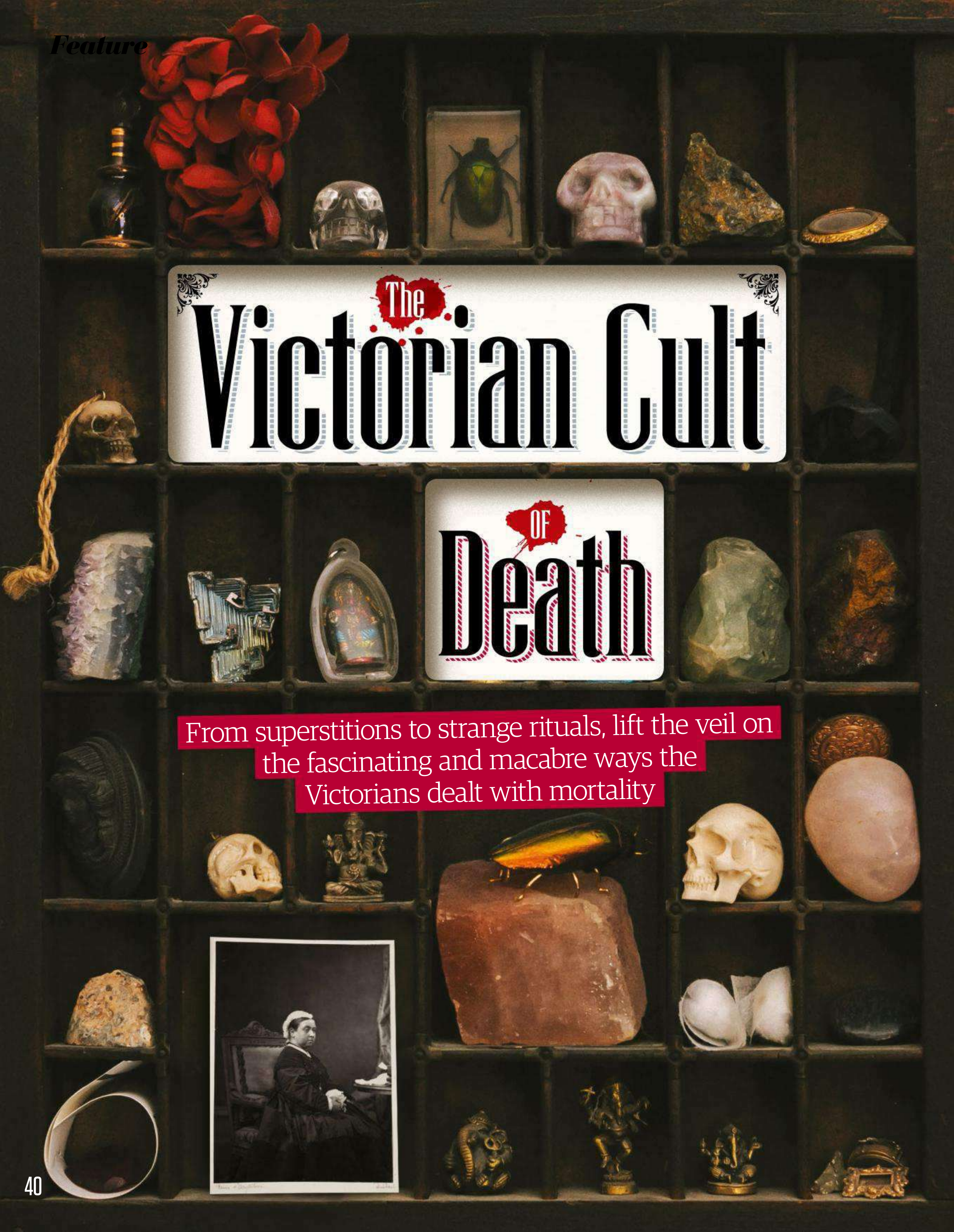
Surely, the business of wooden stakes and impalement had something to do with the famous vampire-removal technique described in Stoker's novel? Actually, it didn't. There is, in fact, zero evidence that Stoker even knew about Vlad's connection to wooden stakes, or had access to any translation of a German account of Vlad dipping bread in the blood of his victims.

Stoker is proven to have actually consulted only one book, found in a library in the seaside resort of Whitby, North Yorkshire, in England, during his 1890 summer vacation. That volume gave him the name Dracula, but included no discussion of blood feasting or impalement, and no description of the atrocious occasion on which 20,000 victims were displayed in a mile-long semicircle outside Dracula's capital city, Târgoviște, as a highly effective warning to oncoming Turkish troops.

Stoker himself actually never even visited Wallachian or Transylvanian regions of Romania – he instead consulted maps and travel guides at home – and did little, if any, additional research into the infamous Impaler. In fact, he already had the story plotted out when his fortuitous discovery of the name Dracula allowed him to give his tale some historical verisimilitude, and a far superior appellation than the over-obvious villain "Count Wampyr" he had originally conceived.



David J Skal's *Something In The Blood: The Untold Story Of Bram Stoker, The Man Who Wrote Dracula* is out 28 October 2016.



The Victorian Cult of Death

From superstitions to strange rituals, lift the veil on the fascinating and macabre ways the Victorians dealt with mortality

From taking photographs of dead relatives to opening shops selling mourning clothes, the Victorians commercialised death. This was an era of industry, with hard work being seen as the creator of fortunes. By the end of the century, there would be compulsory schooling in Britain, better literacy levels, and scientific and medical progress across the Western world. Yet at the same time, the gap between rich and poor was enormous, and poverty levels, economic depression and high mortality rates meant that many were acutely aware of the inevitability of death.

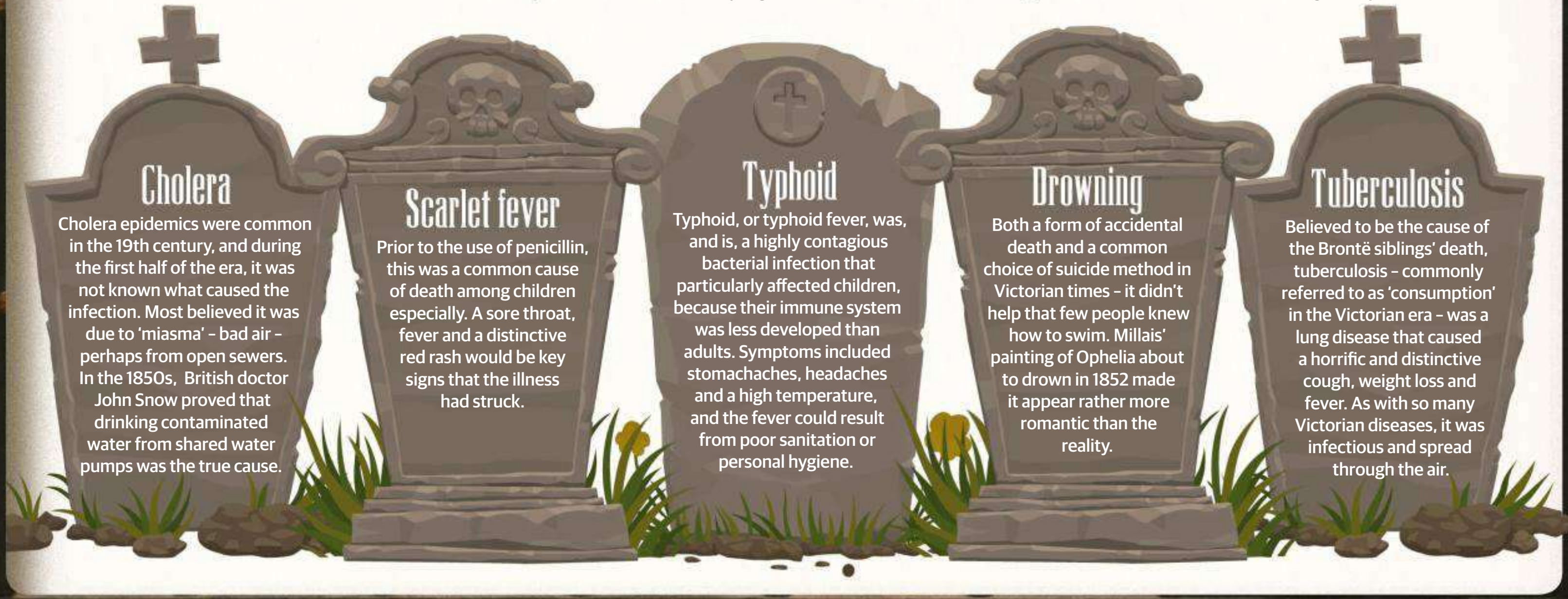
This was heightened by the growth of newspapers, which covered catastrophic events such as the Great Famine in 1840s Ireland, and the deaths of the famous, the rich, and even the poor. In addition, reporters showed little restraint when writing about the horrendous living conditions of the urban poor in grisly detail.

You could not avoid death, either in reality or the media. Both in Britain and the USA, the press detailed strange, unpleasant demises, and the post-mortems that followed them. The Victorian era also saw the creation of illustrated newspapers that depicted corpses in dramatic situations, all to titillate readers. Given the prevalence of loss in everyday life, it is perhaps only natural the Victorians tried to understand it by writing and reading about the subject, and even by shopping for the occasion.

COMMON KILLERS

— Death lurked around every corner, but these were the most likely culprits —

Disease was rife in the Victorian era, and illnesses we shake off today could kill a century ago. Alongside these common causes of death were suicides – the result of mental maladies or financial worries – and accidental deaths, caused by industrial accidents or other workplace incidents in days before health and safety regulations. Children were killed when their clothes caught flame from nearby candles, or when they were scalded with hot water from kettles. The Victorian world was, in short, a dangerous place to live.



Cholera

Cholera epidemics were common in the 19th century, and during the first half of the era, it was not known what caused the infection. Most believed it was due to 'miasma' – bad air – perhaps from open sewers. In the 1850s, British doctor John Snow proved that drinking contaminated water from shared water pumps was the true cause.

Scarlet fever

Prior to the use of penicillin, this was a common cause of death among children especially. A sore throat, fever and a distinctive red rash would be key signs that the illness had struck.

Typhoid

Typhoid, or typhoid fever, was, and is, a highly contagious bacterial infection that particularly affected children, because their immune system was less developed than adults. Symptoms included stomachaches, headaches and a high temperature, and the fever could result from poor sanitation or personal hygiene.

Drowning

Both a form of accidental death and a common choice of suicide method in Victorian times – it didn't help that few people knew how to swim. Millais' painting of Ophelia about to drown in 1852 made it appear rather more romantic than the reality.

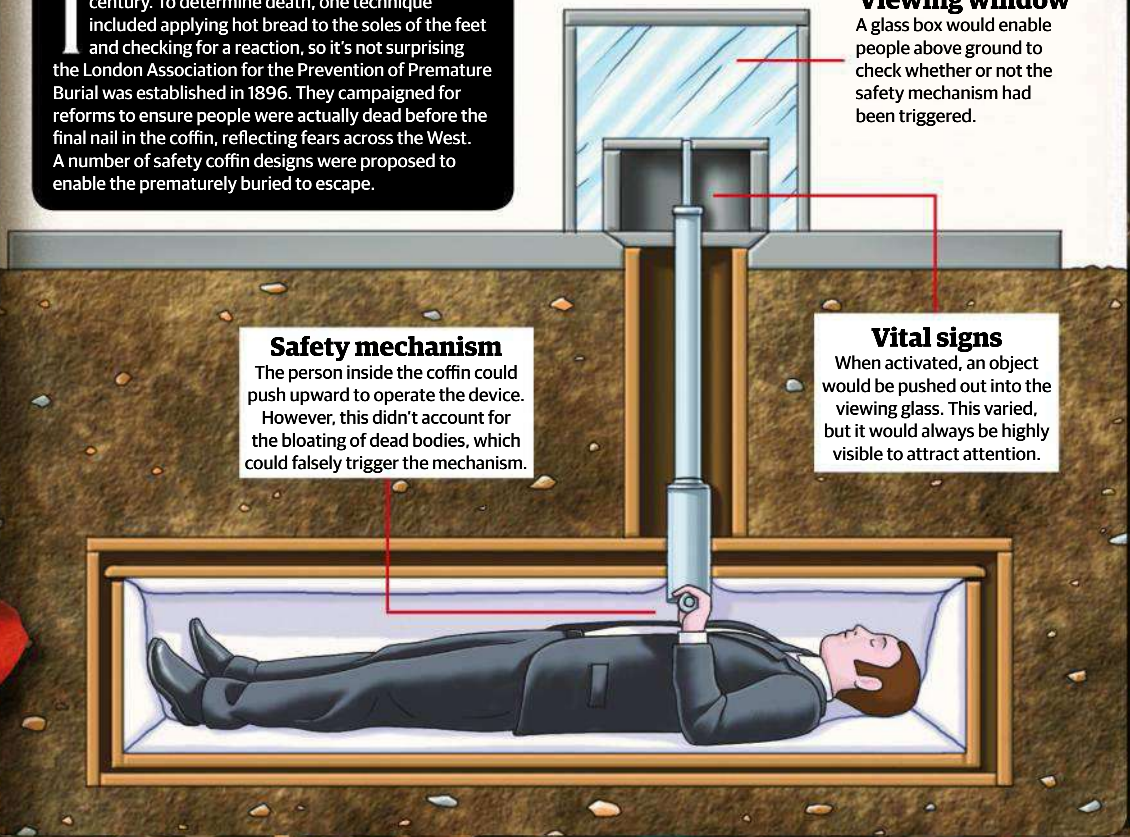
Tuberculosis

Believed to be the cause of the Brontë siblings' death, tuberculosis – commonly referred to as 'consumption' in the Victorian era – was a lung disease that caused a horrific and distinctive cough, weight loss and fever. As with so many Victorian diseases, it was infectious and spread through the air.

THE WAKING DEAD

— Fears of being buried alive led to some ingenious coffin contraptions —

The inaccuracies of medical practices meant there was a real risk of a premature burial in the 19th century. To determine death, one technique included applying hot bread to the soles of the feet and checking for a reaction, so it's not surprising the London Association for the Prevention of Premature Burial was established in 1896. They campaigned for reforms to ensure people were actually dead before the final nail in the coffin, reflecting fears across the West. A number of safety coffin designs were proposed to enable the prematurely buried to escape.



Viewing window
A glass box would enable people above ground to check whether or not the safety mechanism had been triggered.

Safety mechanism
The person inside the coffin could push upward to operate the device. However, this didn't account for the bloating of dead bodies, which could falsely trigger the mechanism.

Vital signs
When activated, an object would be pushed out into the viewing glass. This varied, but it would always be highly visible to attract attention.

DYING TO LOOK GOOD

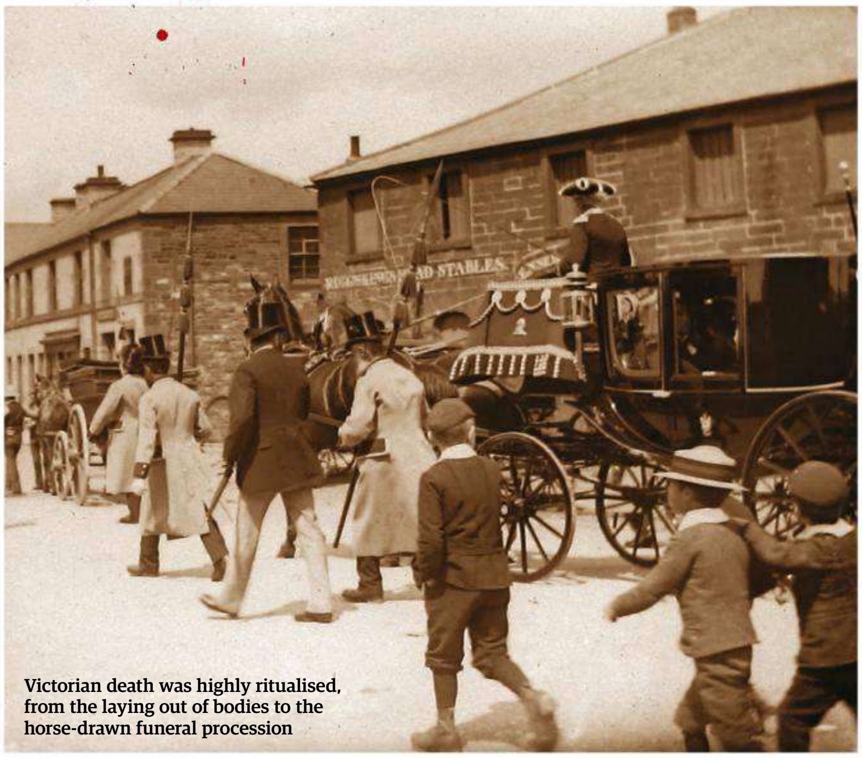
The deceased had to go through a range of procedures to prepare for their big day

Victorian rituals started the second someone died. In the USA, curtains were drawn and clocks stopped at the time of the deceased's death. The house where they had lived would be decorated in black crape, with a wreath hung on the front door. Flowers and candles were placed around the house – not for ambience, but to mask the smell of a decomposing body, lying in state. Corpses were commonly kept at home for around four days, although the duration decreased during the Victorian era.

Photographs of family members might also be placed facedown to protect the people in them from being possessed by the dead person's spirit. In Germany, a woman known as a 'leichenfrau' (corpse bride) would tend to a body, washing and clothing it. Elsewhere, household servants or female family members would take on this role. It was important that the body looked presentable, as people would come to the house to view the dead – a custom that often involved giving visitors food and drink.

When mortuaries were established for bodies to lie in until being interred, cadavers would be watched by attendants, dressed suitably in black, as a means of reassuring the grieving relatives that their loved one was being treated in a dignified way. The attendants were often women, perhaps because of their perceived 'caring' temperament.

Both in Europe and across the Atlantic, bodies would be carried out of the house feet first, to prevent the dead's spirit from making his relatives follow him. The funeral, however, was a largely male event. In the first half of the century, upper-class women would not have gone to funerals, although they might have decorated the coffin prior to the event with flowers, or cut the dead's hair to put into lockets, brooches or rings. Even Queen Victoria did not attend the funeral of her beloved husband, Prince Albert.



Victorian death was highly ritualised, from the laying out of bodies to the horse-drawn funeral procession

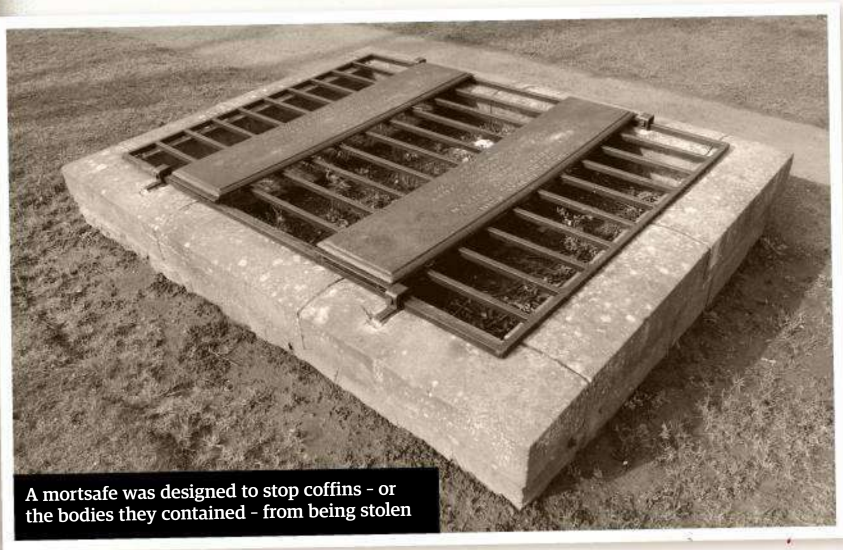
BEWARE THE BODY SNATCHERS

The extravagance involved in many death-related rituals was at odds with the rather grave matter of stealing corpses

The Victorians spent as much money as they were able to on saying goodbye to the dead, and to preserving their memories. The wealthiest would opt for a grand mausoleum, while those who were less well-off might instead commission a gravestone or memorial for their loved ones. Sculptures of angels were particularly popular, signifying a guide to heaven, and sleeping children, flowers and doves, were inscribed onto headstones as well. This desire to establish something permanent was all the more poignant given the fears of grave robbing.

The body snatchers were prominent in early-19th-century Britain, but also in the US, and made money from selling fresh cadavers to medical schools. Prior to the Victorian period, anatomy students would use criminals who had been hanged. However, as the numbers of students increased, the shortage of bodies led to rather entrepreneurial individuals digging up corpses. This caused such panic that a deceased's family and friends would watch over a body until it was buried, and iron coffins were used along with mortsafes - iron bars to protect the coffin - to prevent bodies being dug up. People even drew up wills requesting they be buried in a strong coffin.

In the UK, the 1832 Anatomy Act enabled unclaimed bodies and those donated by relatives to be used for science, effectively ending the trade in corpses. However, in the USA, this sinister business continued until the late-19th century, as more medical schools were established, and in 1878, a US congressman's body was snatched by Ohio Medical College students. But even if body snatching was becoming less common as the Victorian period progressed, the fear of it remained, along with the practice of creating a lasting memorial to a loved one.

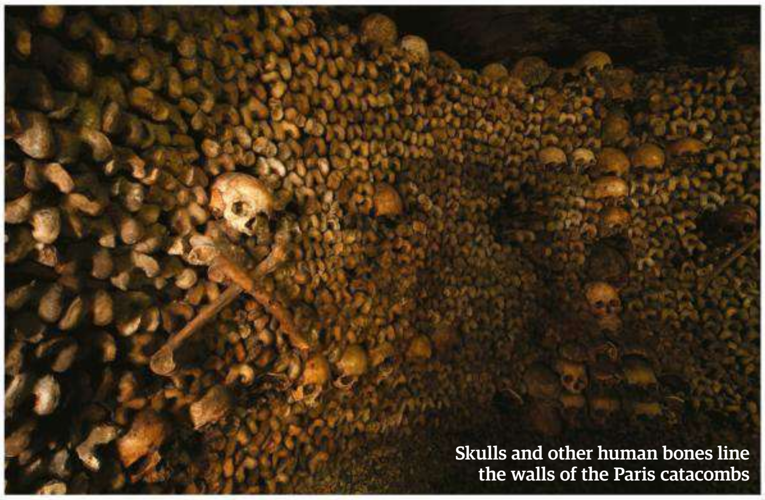


A mortsafe was designed to stop coffins - or the bodies they contained - from being stolen

TUNNELS OF DEATH

Dark chambers beneath Paris keep the remains of 6 million people

Deep beneath the heart of Paris, just south of the former city gate appropriately named the Gate of Hell, are the city catacombs. Beginning in the 1780s, the remains of more than 6 million people have gradually been moved here. The distinctive stacking of skulls that visitors can see today is a result of the renovations that took place in the early-19th century, when the cemeteries were overflowing. Remains were moved to Paris's former quarries, and skulls and bones were stacked from floor to ceiling. There were even separate rooms to display skeletal deformities and monumental tablets. From 1850, the catacombs opened to the public four times a year, and as interest grew, this was eventually increased to daily visits in the 1900s and has remained a macabre attraction ever since.

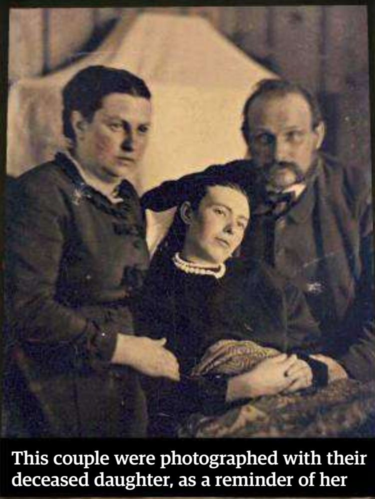


Skulls and other human bones line the walls of the Paris catacombs

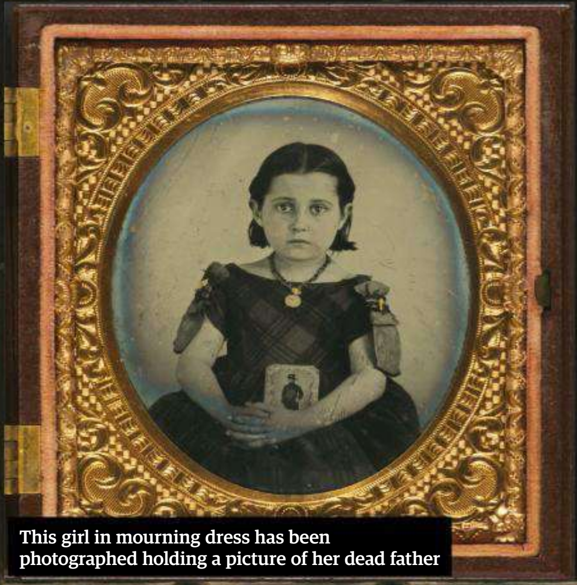
20 metres
The depth is equivalent to a five-storey building

800 metres
The length of the galleries in the ossuary

14°c
The constant temperature in the catacombs



This couple were photographed with their deceased daughter, as a reminder of her

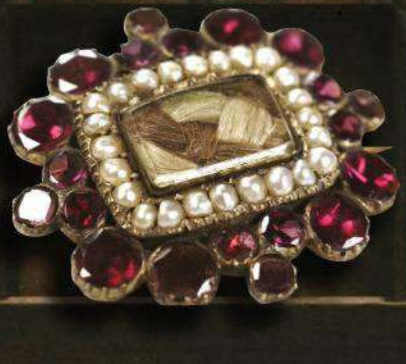


This girl in mourning dress has been photographed holding a picture of her dead father

MEMENTO MORI

These artistic reminders of mortality were prized by Victorians

Memento mori – meaning 'remember you will die' – were, in Victorian times, physical reminders of mortality, and could take various forms. Watches decorated with phrases relating to death, rings featuring locks of hair from deceased loved ones, brooches featuring skull designs or images – items such as these were used to both remember the dead and to remind the living that they would follow suit. At the most disturbing level to modern minds, the Victorians also took post-mortem photographs of the dearly departed, often posed with their surviving relatives. Due to the cost, this would sometimes be the only photograph ever taken of an individual.



A Victorian mourning brooch often contained the hair of a deceased relative

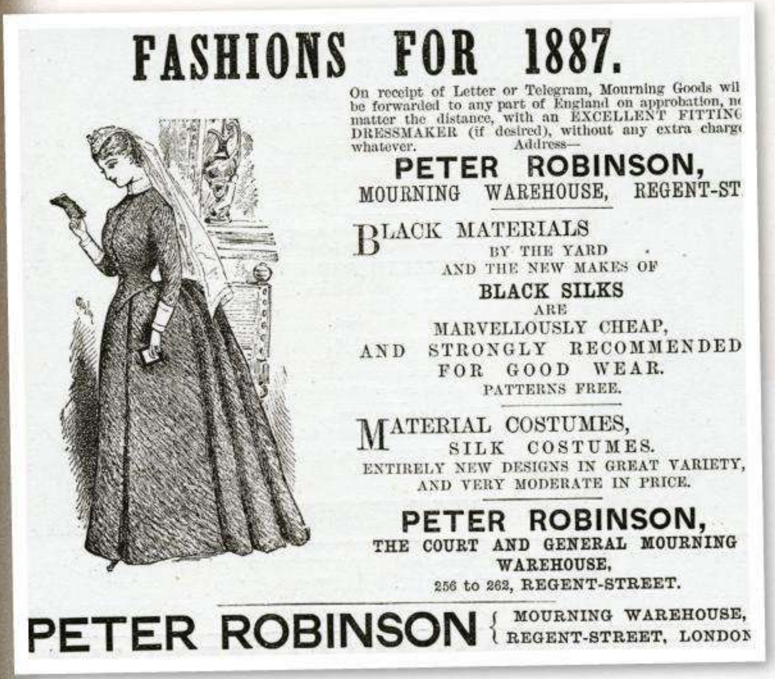
MOURNING RITUALS

From dress to funeral etiquette, the Victorians had strict rules on how to deal with death

Queen Victoria was a deeply unpopular queen for many years after the death of Prince Albert. It was felt she had gone overboard with mourning for her much-loved husband, wearing widow's weeds for longer than was traditional and hiding herself away. For there were rules and expectations surrounding how Victorians should deal with death and its attendant rituals. Even what they wore was subject to detailed procedures – so much so that household manuals advised readers as to what was appropriate and how long a particular outfit should be worn. Initially, women wore deepest mourning clothes that were black and made of silk, bombazine or crape. Then, gradually, the colours could lighten, becoming grey or mauve. The length of time they wore mourning clothes depended on who had died – was it a husband (which required two years' mourning), or a cousin (just one month)?

> "THE SUPERSTITIOUS VICTORIANS SAW IT AS UNLUCKY TO STORE MOURNING OUTFITS AT HOME BETWEEN USES"

With mourning clothes required, so too were shops specialising in such outfits. This was especially so, as the superstitious Victorians saw it as unlucky to store mourning outfits at home 'between uses' and so disposed of their clothes once the period of mourning had ended, buying new outfits each time someone died. Black-edged stationery was also required, and when the deceased's family wished to signal that they were ready to socialise again, they were supposed to leave cards with their friends – if they didn't, these friends would leave them alone, to respect their privacy. If cards were left for them to inquire as to their well-being, they were expected to send cards back with "thanks for kind inquiries" written on them. As with many Victorian customs, it was all about one's social appearance, and one magazine noted that "established customs" should be adhered to simply to avoid "shocking" society and appearing "heartless".



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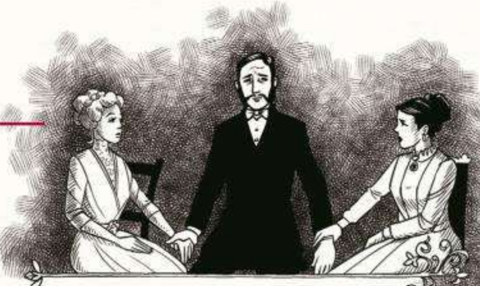
SPEAKING TO THE DEAD

– How creative con artists became the talk of Victorian society –

Spiritualism - the belief that ghosts exist and we can communicate with them - came into being as a movement in 1848 via three American sisters: Leah, Margaret and Kate Fox. The trio hit the headlines with a sensational (and totally bogus) ghost story in which they said they had communicated with the spirit haunting their home using a series of knocks - one for 'yes', two for 'no'. Rumours soon spread that the spirit belonged to a murdered peddler whose body was hidden in the cellar. The women were quickly promoted as mediums, making a fortune by holding crowded séances where they would contact the deceased at the audience's command.

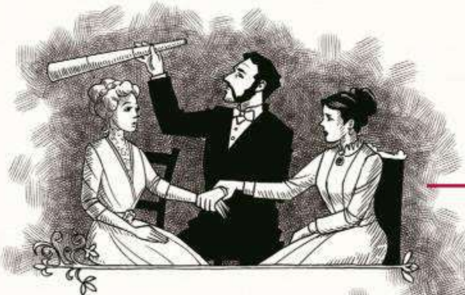
With this business model behind them, mediums began to spring up all over the USA and then in Britain, holding intimate gatherings in darkened homes or more outlandish spectacles in music halls and theatres - for a fee.

Some might have been well-intentioned, genuinely convinced they could contact the dead, but most were frauds, using dim gaslight, sleight of hand and ingenious contraptions to hoodwink the vulnerable. Sadly, many were only too willing to believe. With technology advancing at an unbelievable pace, anything seemed possible. If they could send messages between continents via cables, then why couldn't they communicate with the afterlife?



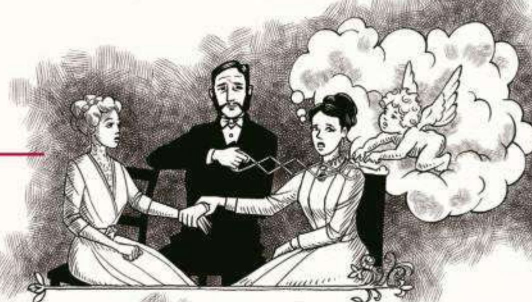
Take my hand

The lights are turned down or put out completely and the medium invites the participants to hold hands, or hold the wrist of the person to their left or right, to prove there's no foul play.



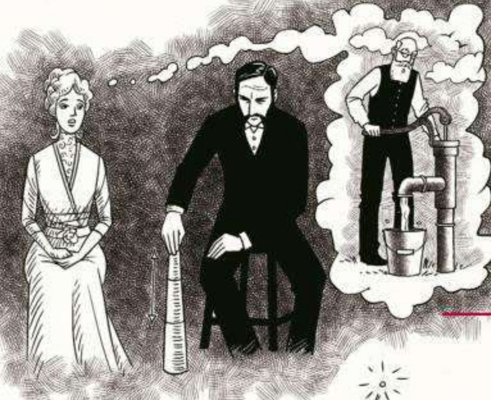
The spirits arrive

Pretending to enter a trance to communicate with the spirits, the medium twitches and jerks one hand loose. Scrambling for it in the dark, the participants either side don't realise they've been tricked into taking the same hand.



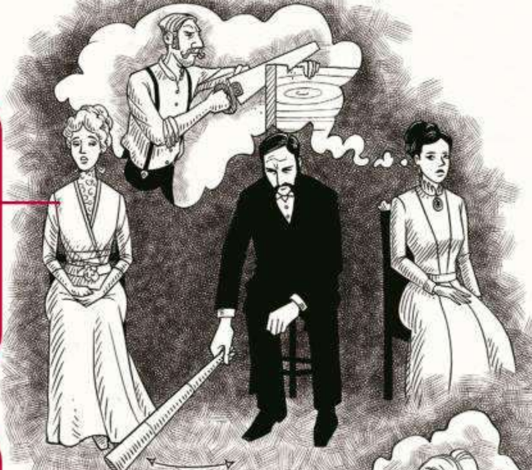
The spirits reach out

Using either their own hand, a waxwork replacement, a stuffed glove or a telescopic rod to reach across the table, the medium can now pretend a spirit is touching the audience.



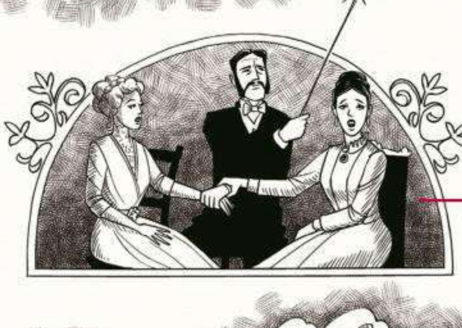
Ghostly wheezing

One account from 1925 detailed a ghostly farmer being summoned from the grave. The sound of him pumping water was produced by a collapsible trumpet being surreptitiously opened and closed.



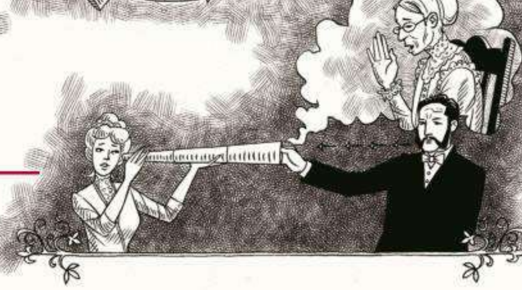
Sound effects

Should the ghostly tradesman have required it, the sound of sawing wood could be made by dragging the trumpet across the floor or moving the collapsible sections up and down within each other.



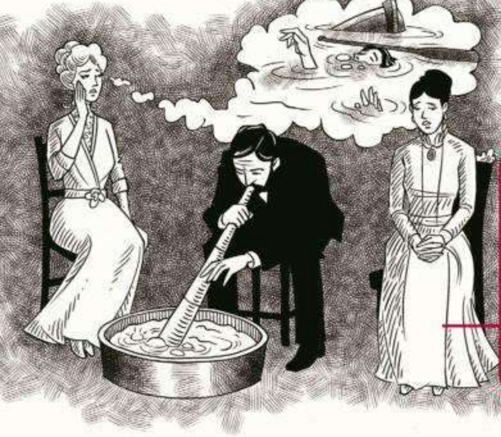
Spectral lights

Mysterious glowing orbs, objects or even faces could be produced by adding a dab of luminous paint to a stick, which would then appear to hover above the table.



Voices from the void

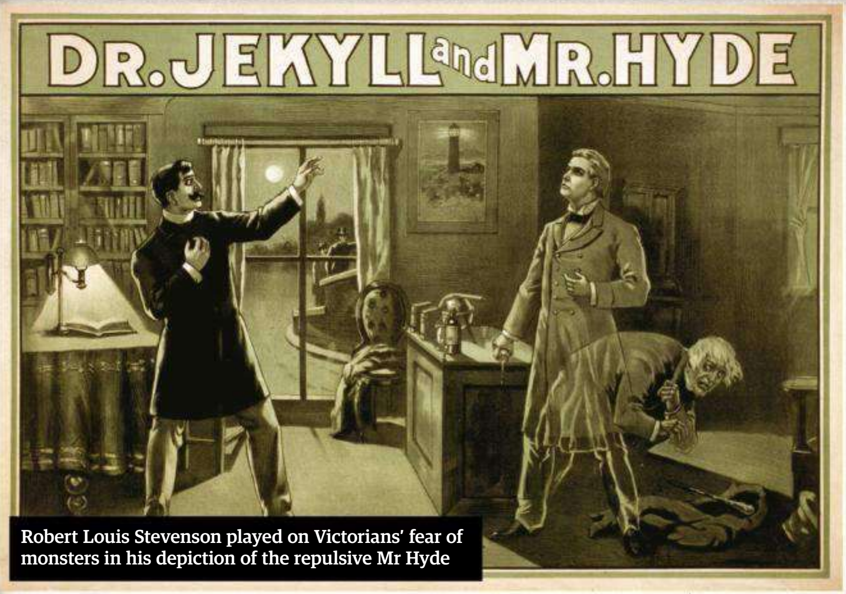
In other séances the trumpet would be the centre of attention rather than a sneaky secret, channelling spooky whispers from the beyond - either the medium was a ventriloquist or he had a hidden accomplice.



Deadly Drowning

Most distressingly, one account recalls a medium sneaking a bowl of water onto the table and blowing through a straw to simulate drowning. He cried out, "Help me! Help me!" for good measure.

Illustration by Geri Ford / Art Agency


DR. JEKYLL and MR. HYDE

Robert Louis Stevenson played on Victorians' fear of monsters in his depiction of the repulsive Mr Hyde

TELLING GHOST STORIES

In an era of austere poverty and high mortality, the Victorians developed an appetite for horror

Gothic fiction was a type of horror story that originated in the late-18th century, but peaked during the Victorian era. From Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) to Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case Of Dr Jekyll And Mr Hyde* (1886), Victorian audiences were fed a literary diet of monsters and ghouls, both entertaining and frightening in equal measure.

This genre of fiction was not restricted to Britain; in Germany, the Schauerroman ('shudder novel') featured similar motifs, while in Russia, Vladimir Odoevsky penned *The Living Corpse* in 1838, with Aleksey Konstantinovich Tolstoy publishing *The Vampire* two years later. The most famous purveyor of Gothic fiction in the USA was Edgar Allan Poe, and his tales of madness were seen as following the German style of Gothic horror. *The Fall Of The House Of Usher* and his poem *The Raven* still send chills down spines today.

Victorian Gothic horror frequently involved death, or the fear of death, reflecting society's preoccupation with the subject - a result of high mortality rates and the constant threat of disease. Panics about crime and rural to urban migration also sparked concerns about the stranger in one's midst. People were less likely to know their neighbours in Victorian times than they would have done in earlier, more stable, rural communities, and the increasing number of strangers led to them being demonised in fiction.

The after-effects of the industrial revolution were felt in depictions of cities as sprawling, dark places, and the growing gap between rich and poor was also portrayed as something evil, as shown in works by authors such as Bram Stoker and Charles Dickens. But most of all, the obsession with Gothic literature reflected the Victorians' similar obsession with mortality, death, and mourning.

THE MEANING OF MONSTERS

19th-century authors created characters that played on contemporary fears about strangers, crime and disease. Here are the most famous

Dracula

Count Dracula, a vampire, was a creature caught between life and death. He is thought to reflect fears of immigration and sexual promiscuity. Being bitten is akin to being diseased, with 'cures' being sought to make the bitten well again.

Mr Hyde

The mysterious, hunchbacked Hyde is the alter-ego of Dr Jekyll, who has created a potion that enables him to become this repulsive being. Hyde represented both sex - something Victorians were keen to 'hide' - and the supernatural.

Frankenstein's monster

Victor Frankenstein's creation of a monster made of body parts from dead criminals reflected concerns about body snatchers, and how medicine and science - in particular, the development of electricity - could be used for evil as well as good.

Heathcliff

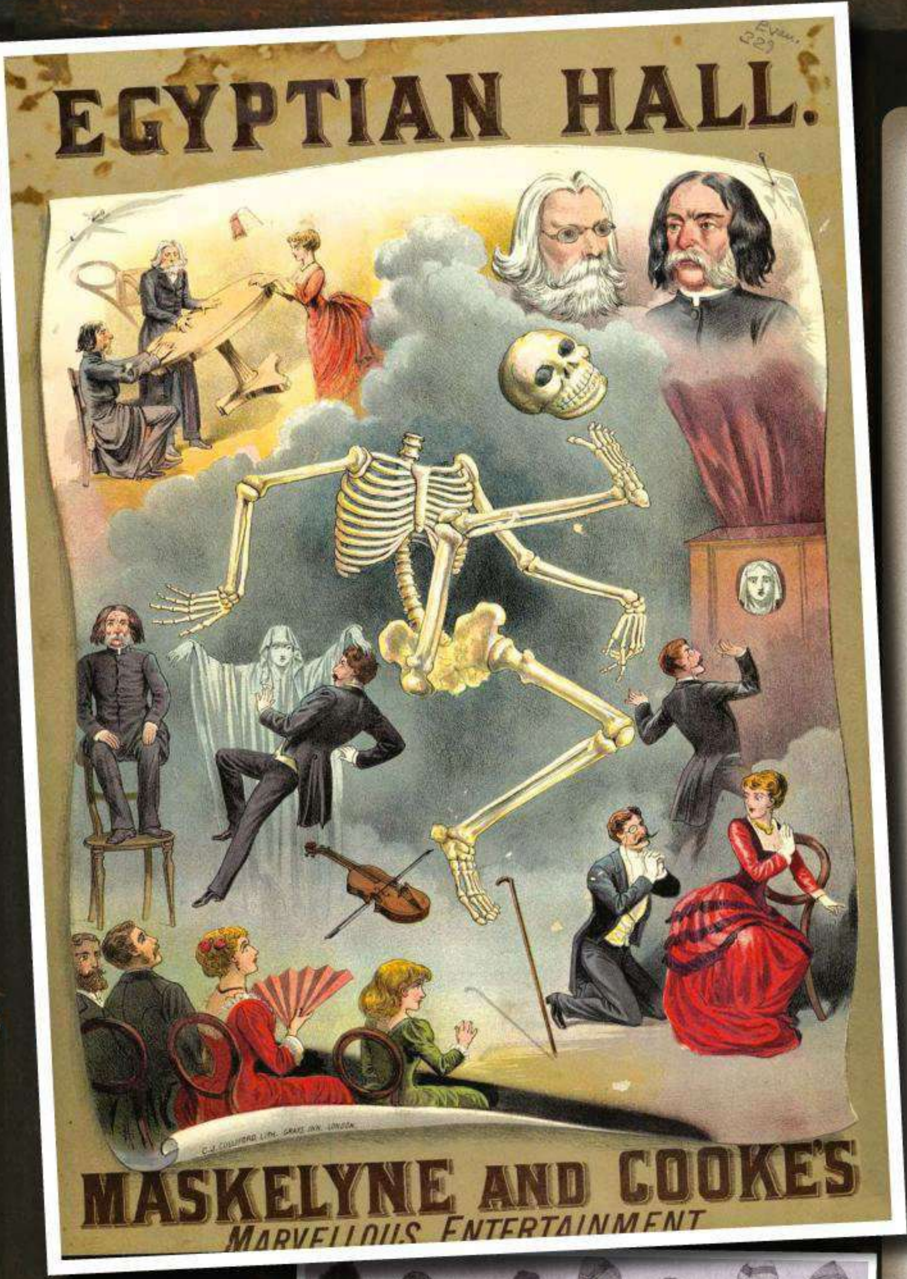
The anti-hero of *Wuthering Heights*, Heathcliff is not a monster per se, but is certainly monstrous. He comes from an unknown background, is cruel and feared by others. His darkness and outcast status make him akin to Hyde and Frankenstein's monster.

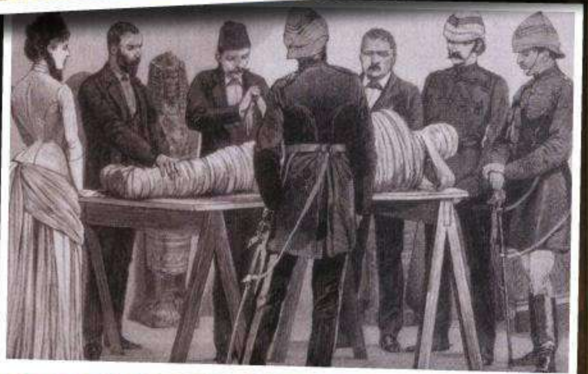
MURDER AND MAYHEM AT THE GRAND GUIGNOL

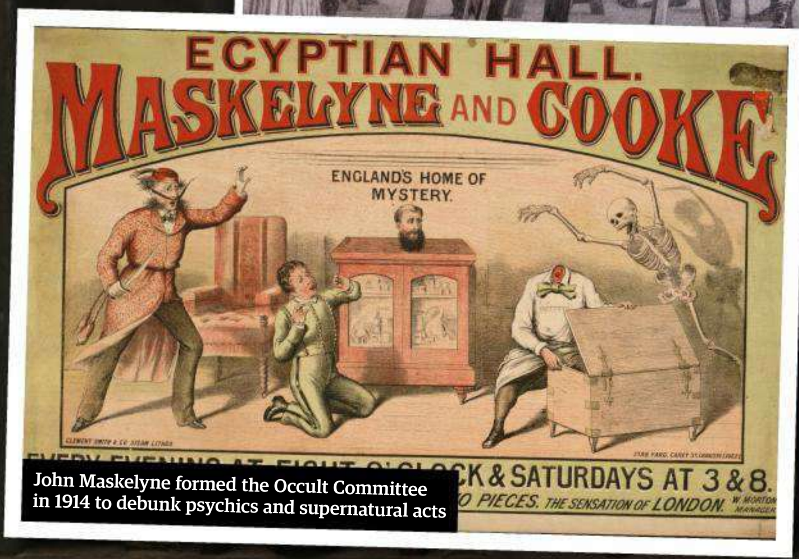
Before slasher movies, there was a French theatre of terror that turned stomachs

Opening in 1897, Paris's Théâtre du Grand-Guignol shocked and thrilled audiences with murder and torture so realistic it made people vomit and faint. It was originally designed to explore subjects not normally seen as fit for theatre - criminals, prostitutes and sinister asylums - to criticise the social inequalities of the era; its name was taken from a violent French puppet, in the style of English *Punch and Judy*, but the plays were strictly for adults.

The building had originally been a chapel, and the 'confessional'-style boxes, Gothic style and angels flanking the stage, bearing witness to the brutal acts, only added to the eerie ambience. Some plays looked at the individual consciousness and the passage from one existence to another, and this was key to the theatre's success. Death was ever present in real life, but the horrors of the Grand Guignol could actually offer comfort by helping audiences understand it - and the possibility of some form of life beyond the veil.






EGYPTIAN HALL.
MASKELYNE AND COOKE
ENGLAND'S HOME OF MYSTERY.
CK & SATURDAYS AT 3 & 8.
O PIECES. THE SENSATION OF LONDON.
W. MORTON MANAGER

John Maskelyne formed the Occult Committee in 1914 to debunk psychics and supernatural acts

THE MUMMY RETURNS

As Egyptomania swept through Victorian England, centuries-old corpses inspired a wave of creepy customs

Ancient Egyptians believed in giving their dead an appropriate send-off, constructing elaborate mausolea to them, and entombing their corpses with personal possessions that might assist them in the afterlife. For the Victorians, with their morbid and complex rituals, the example of these ancient people was one to follow. Throughout the 19th century, Egyptian influences could be found in women's mourning jewellery, which often featured obelisks or scarabs, and on tombs, mausolea, cemetery gates and even entire graveyards, which had an Egyptian style of architecture or decorative features.

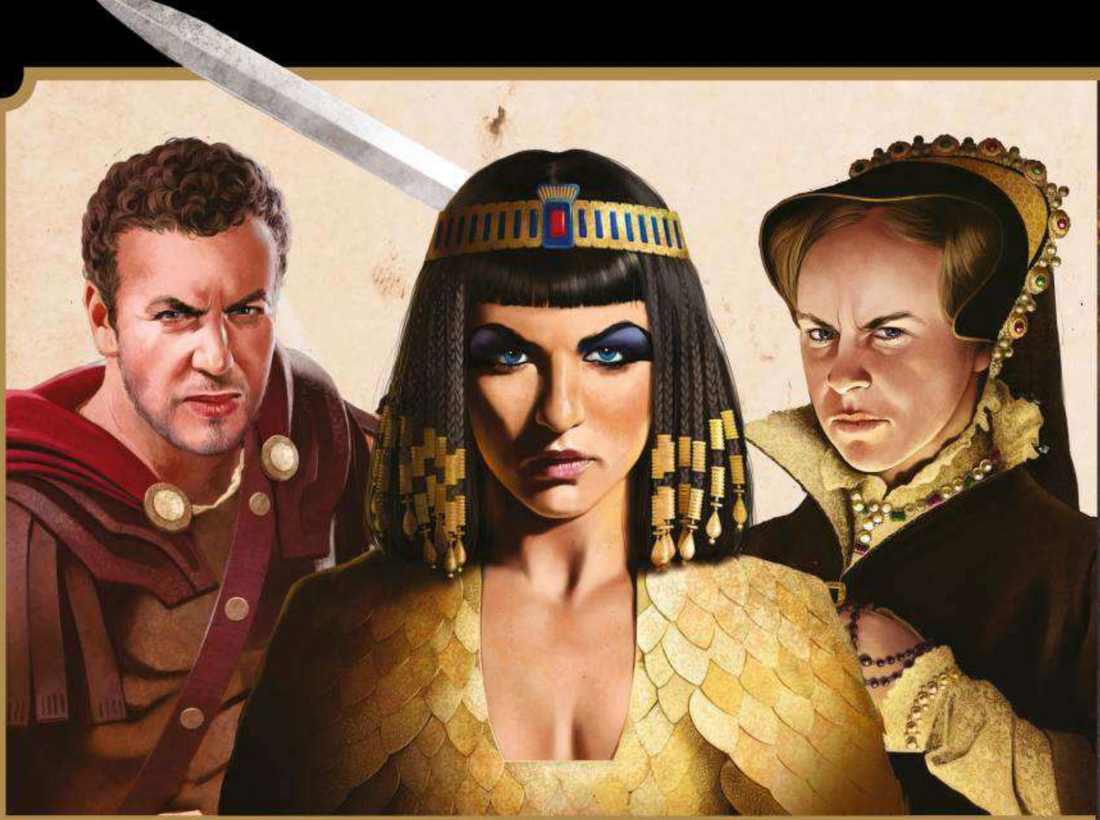
> "THESE COD-SCIENTIFIC DISPLAYS WERE, IN REALITY, MORE ABOUT PLAYING ON PEOPLE'S DESIRE TO BE SCARED AND ENTERTAINED"

Ancient Egyptian texts were translated by German Egyptologist Karl Richard Lepsius in the 1840s, and detailed their beliefs about death and the afterlife, showing dead bodies reanimating. Naturally, the Victorians were very curious about Egyptian mummies. Antiquities had been brought from Egypt to Europe – especially England, but also Italy and Germany – in the late-18th and early-19th centuries, but now, these concealed corpses became objects of intense interest.

At the start of the era, surgeon Thomas Pettigrew began organising public events where people could go to watch mummies being unwrapped. However, these cod-scientific displays were, in reality, more about playing on people's desire to be scared and entertained in equal measure. Pettigrew would saw off parts of the mummy's skull, showing how the brains had been removed, and, for his big finale, would raise the mummy to its feet, as though it was still alive. Such events continued throughout the century.

This link between fear, entertainment and science, with its specific Egyptian focus, was highlighted by the presence of the Egyptian Hall in London's Piccadilly. Built in Egyptian style in 1812, it was originally a museum designed to house curiosities from the South Seas, but by the late 1800s it was associated with séances, theatre and magic shows – consistent with the general trend toward spookiness, from the curious and enlightened 1820s to the morbidly fascinated 1880s. The in-house duo of Maskelyne and Cooke did openly fake séances and hauntings, and it became famous for 'anti spiritualism'. John Nevil Maskelyne probably wondered why he bothered. So skilful were the pair's recreations that, "...the Spiritualists had no alternative but to claim us as the most powerful spirit mediums who found it more profitable to deny the assistance of spirits."

In a world that was advancing at an unprecedented pace – where steam trains carved a path through the countryside and suspension bridges loomed large on the landscape – the Victorian era was also a golden age of belief. Religion, spiritualism and magic pervaded every aspect of daily life, from literature and architecture, to fashion and social etiquette – it was a unique period in history where science and the supernatural were often one and the same.



KINGS & QUEENS

The amazing stories behind history's most powerful, mighty and magnificent monarchs

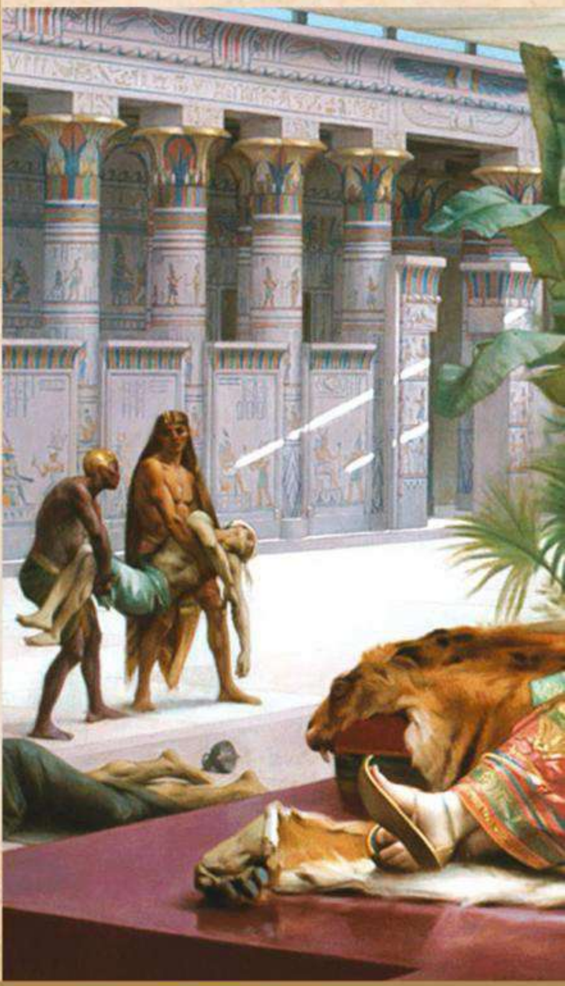
50 Serpent of the Nile: Cleopatra
How a power struggle and love affair sealed the fate of Cleopatra

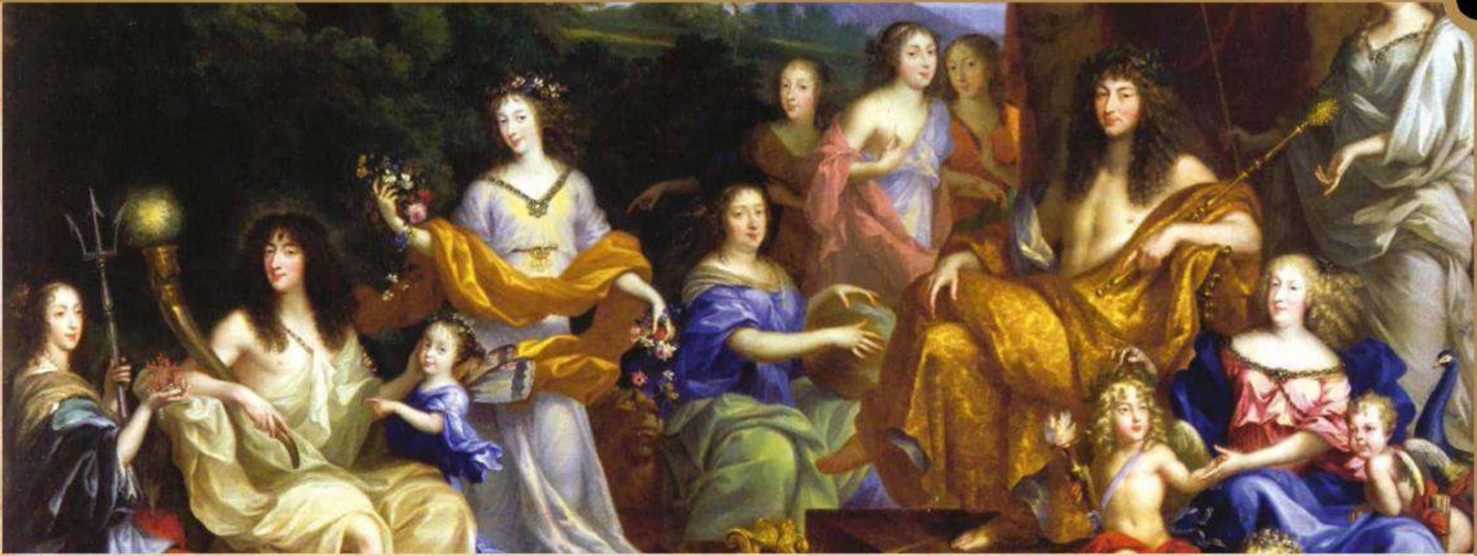
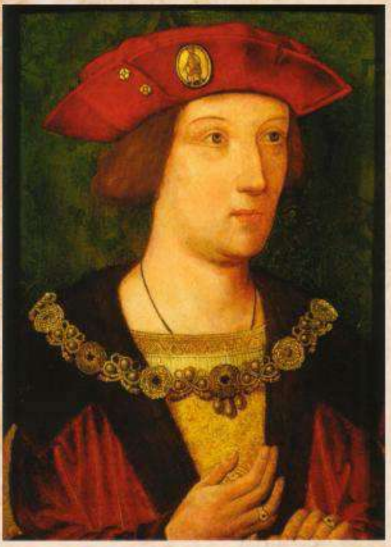
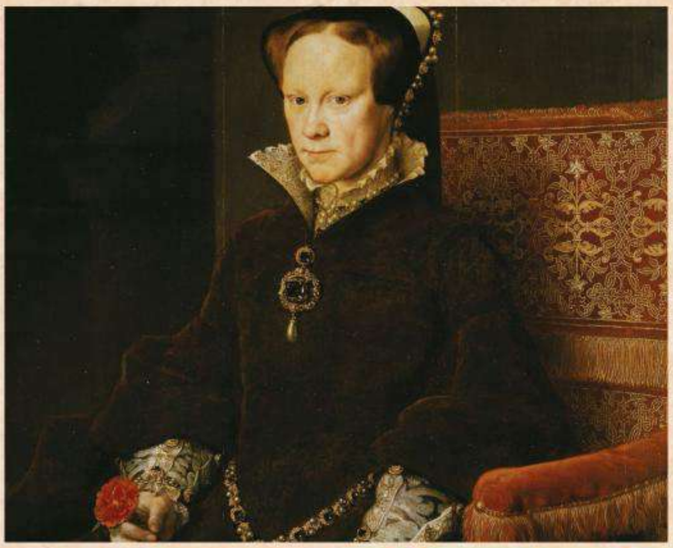
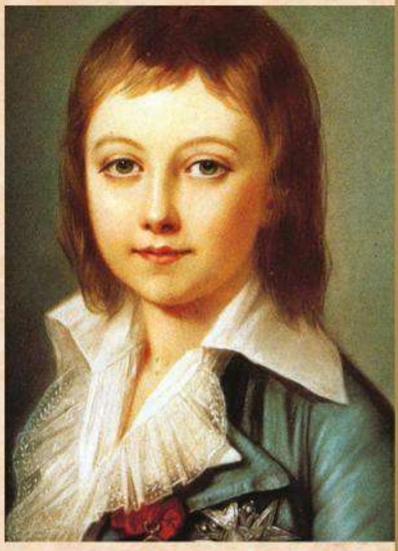
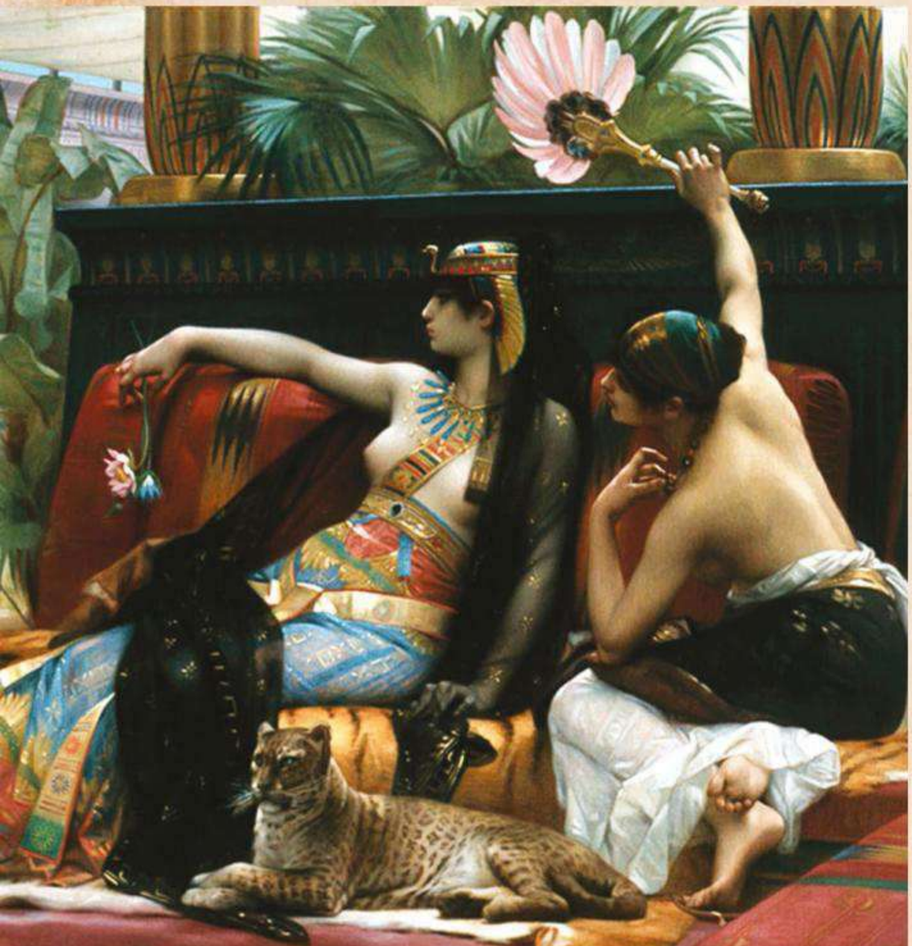
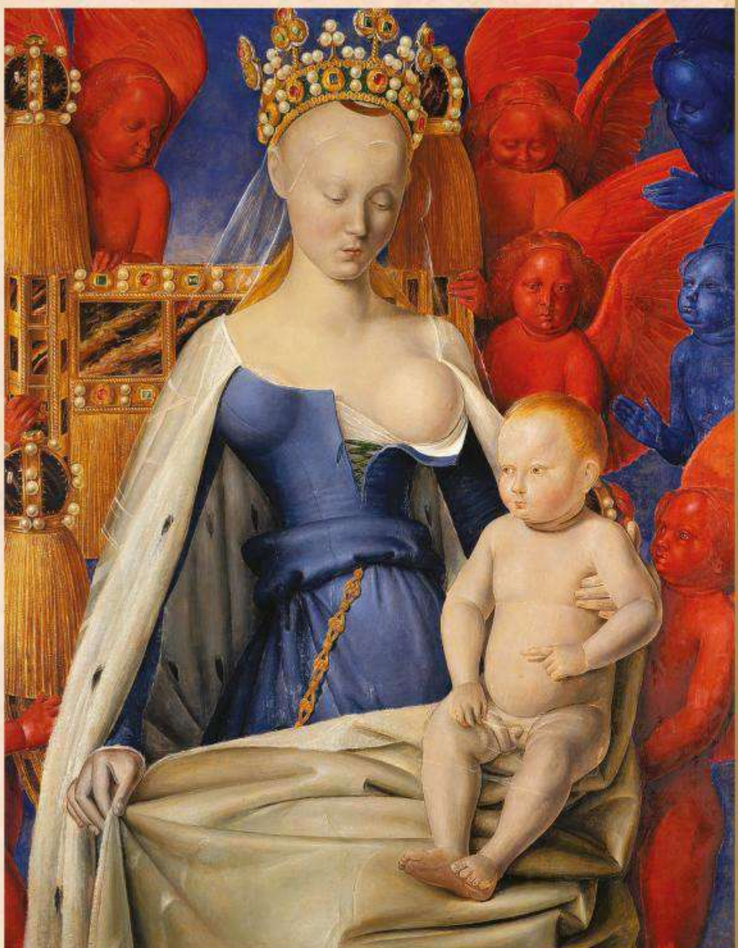
60 King Louis XIV of France
The Sun King was both a shining beacon and disruptive force

64 Lost Monarchs
The would-be kings that changed the course of history

70 Bloody Mary On Trial
Henry VIII's deadliest daughter or the victim of propaganda?

80 Notorious Royal Mistresses
The beauties, harlots and seductresses vying for power in the royal bedchamber



SPQR

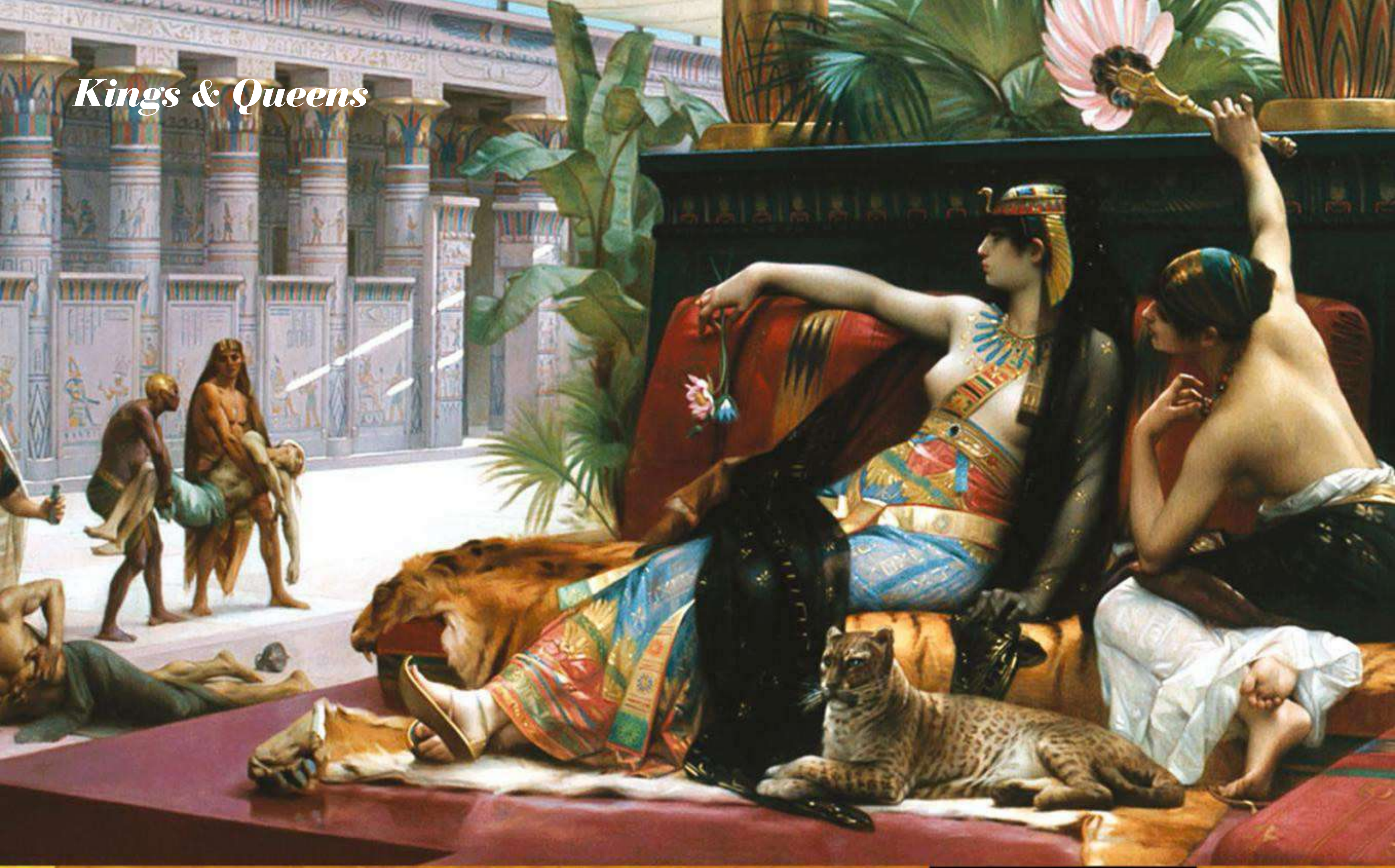
SERPENT OF THE NILE

CLEOPATRA

How a poisonous power struggle and doomed love affair sealed the fate of Egypt's goddess queen

When they brought Mark Antony to Cleopatra, he was bleeding out fast. The Roman general had lost the battle, he believed his lover to be dead, and rather than surrender, he had chosen an honourable death and fallen upon his own sword. Hidden inside Cleopatra's monument in the ancient city of Alexandria, Antony lay in her arms as strained, haggard breaths fell from his lips. He was wrong. She wasn't dead. It would be his final mistake in a life ruled by rash decisions. He had fought wars for her, betrayed the state for her, killed for her and now he was dying for her. As Antony breathed his last, Cleopatra was, not for the first time, faced with the death of a man she loved. Their united force had the power to change the course of the Roman Empire and, ultimately, the world. However, the events that had led to that man dying in her arms actually began 14 years ago, with another captivating man and another tragic death.

Cleopatra had worked tirelessly to secure her future with Julius Caesar, forming a strong partnership with the Roman leader. She had also borne a son and claimed he was Caesar's, naming him Caesarion, 'little Caesar'. With her powerful lover by her side, she hoped her child could come to rule a unified and powerful kingdom. She even made steps to live with Caesar in Rome, but her plans came crashing down when the man she had pinned her ambitions to was brutally murdered, betrayed by those closest to him. The Egyptian ruler had been popular while she was with Caesar but, alone and exposed, the hostility in Rome began to close around her, and Cleopatra fled with her love child back to Egypt. There she would need to re-assess, re-group and plan her next move carefully.



Cleopatra fought with her younger brother for sole rulership of Egypt

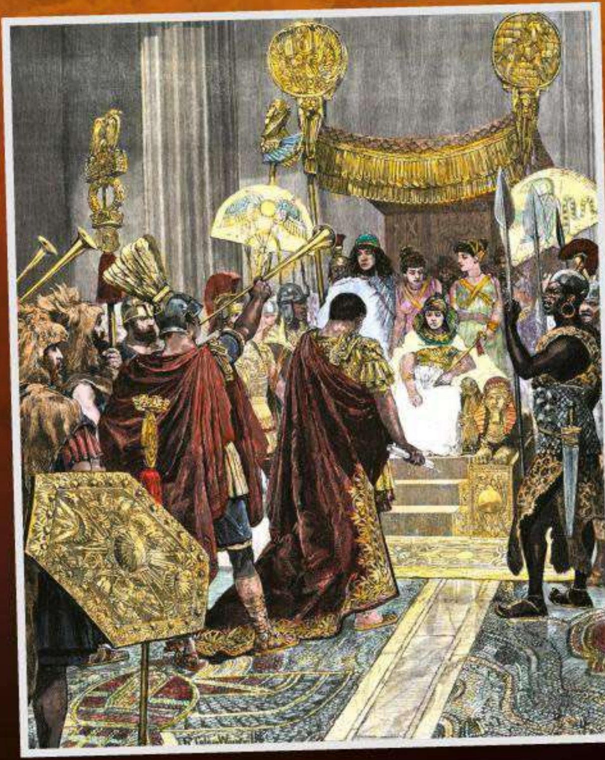
> "She travelled in a magnificent barge. The sight of her as she sailed up the river to meet Antony was astonishing"

The pharaoh was not the only one forced to re-assess her position upon the death of Caesar, there was another man whose entire future would be forever altered by it - Caesar's loyal general, Mark Antony. Antony had not had an easy upbringing. Although born into the nobility, his father was corrupt and incompetent, meaning he had no strong parental figure to guide him through adolescence. In his youth he fell into a life of gambling, drinking and love affairs with his greatest weakness: women. Antony was a rebellious, spirited youth and he revelled in the life of excess. It was not until he joined the military and began growing close to Caesar that his life was given order and focus.

Antony's relationship with Caesar had been anything but stable, but he had always returned to his superior's side and remained loyal, rejecting the offer to take part in the assassination, and trying, but failing, to warn Caesar of the plans. During his time as a general, Antony had gained political acumen, but even in his 40s he still possessed the fiery heart of a rebellious youth, and it was his heart that he followed without question. This passion bubbled over at Caesar's funeral when he was overcome with emotion and, as he spoke to the people, seized his leader's toga, stained with blood, and sent the spectators into a frenzy. The city erupted into a riot, buildings were burned to the ground and terrified conspirators fled.

It is for this reason - despite his lack of wisdom and subtlety - that his foes began to fear him. Antony was like a rabid animal, and his actions were impossible to predict. The power vacuum caused by Caesar's murder had plunged Rome into civil war, and it wasn't until 41 BCE that vague stability was established. Leadership of the empire was shared between Antony and Octavian, Caesar's adopted son and named heir; Octavian took the western states, while Antony ruled over the eastern region.

Facing the growing threat of the Parthian Empire, Antony wished to arrange a military campaign to push them back, but he lacked one thing: money. For this he set his sights on a powerful ally, and richest woman in the world - the Egyptian Pharaoh Cleopatra. She had aligned with his friend, Caesar, and he was hoping she would do the same for him. He summoned her to



Mark Antony is received by Cleopatra in Egypt in 41 BCE. Antony was so charmed by Cleopatra's grand entrance that he chose to extend his stay with her

A GREEK FAMILY OF EGYPTIAN PHARAOHS

Inbreeding and murder, how the Ptolemaic dynasty held on to power

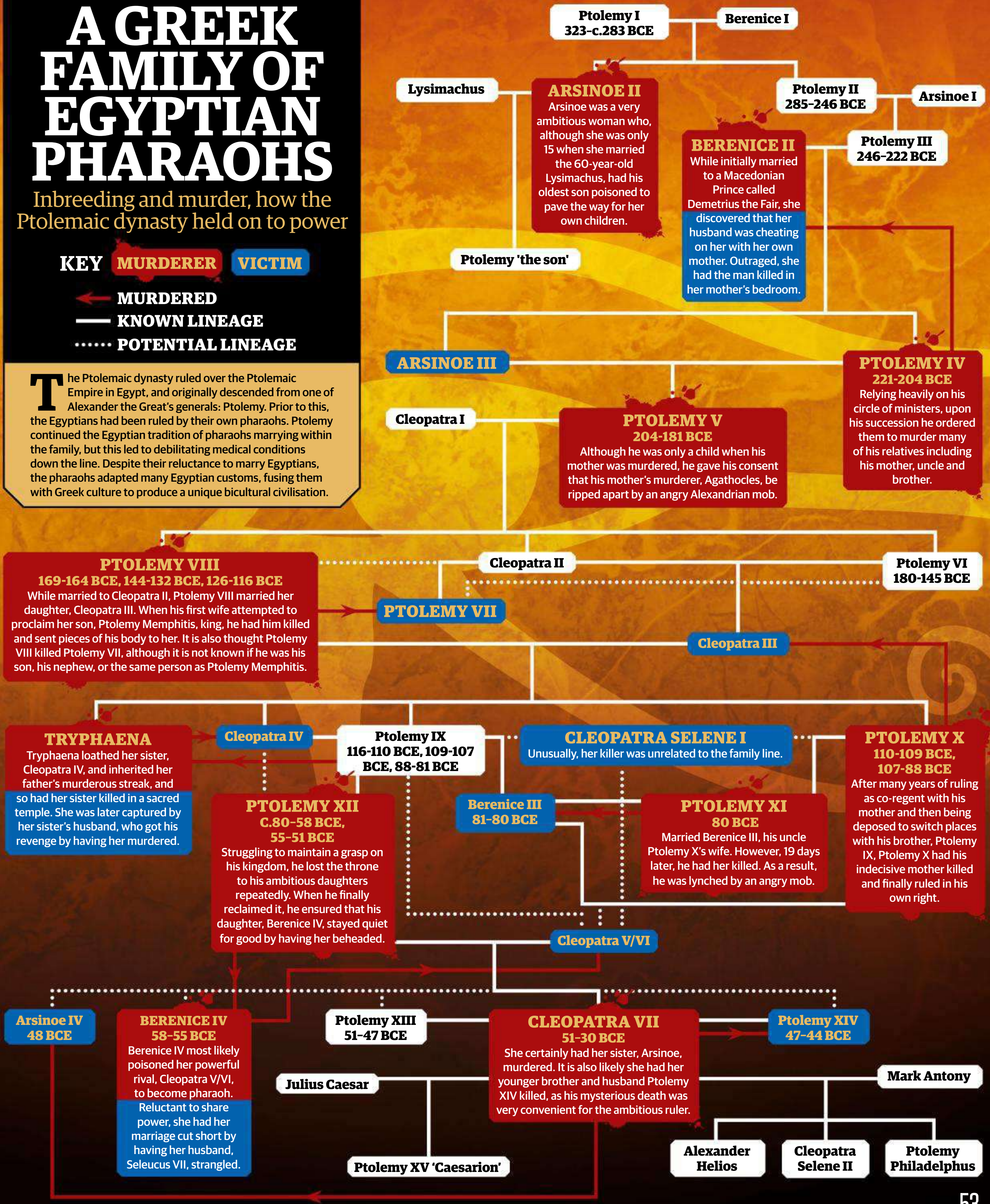
KEY **MURDERER** **VICTIM**

← **MURDERED**

— **KNOWN LINEAGE**

······ **POTENTIAL LINEAGE**

The Ptolemaic dynasty ruled over the Ptolemaic Empire in Egypt, and originally descended from one of Alexander the Great's generals: Ptolemy. Prior to this, the Egyptians had been ruled by their own pharaohs. Ptolemy continued the Egyptian tradition of pharaohs marrying within the family, but this led to debilitating medical conditions down the line. Despite their reluctance to marry Egyptians, the pharaohs adapted many Egyptian customs, fusing them with Greek culture to produce a unique bicultural civilisation.



Ptolemy I
323-c.283 BCE

Berenice I

Lysimachus

ARSINOE II
Arsinoe was a very ambitious woman who, although she was only 15 when she married the 60-year-old Lysimachus, had his oldest son poisoned to pave the way for her own children.

Ptolemy II
285-246 BCE

Arsinoe I

BERENICE II
While initially married to a Macedonian Prince called Demetrius the Fair, she discovered that her husband was cheating on her with her own mother. Outraged, she had the man killed in her mother's bedroom.

Ptolemy III
246-222 BCE

Ptolemy 'the son'

ARSINOE III

PTOLEMY IV
221-204 BCE
Relying heavily on his circle of ministers, upon his succession he ordered them to murder many of his relatives including his mother, uncle and brother.

Cleopatra I

PTOLEMY V
204-181 BCE
Although he was only a child when his mother was murdered, he gave his consent that his mother's murderer, Agathocles, be ripped apart by an angry Alexandrian mob.

PTOLEMY VIII
169-164 BCE, 144-132 BCE, 126-116 BCE
While married to Cleopatra II, Ptolemy VIII married her daughter, Cleopatra III. When his first wife attempted to proclaim her son, Ptolemy Memphitis, king, he had him killed and sent pieces of his body to her. It is also thought Ptolemy VIII killed Ptolemy VII, although it is not known if he was his son, his nephew, or the same person as Ptolemy Memphitis.

Cleopatra II

Ptolemy VI
180-145 BCE

PTOLEMY VII

Cleopatra III

TRYPHAENA
Tryphaena loathed her sister, Cleopatra IV, and inherited her father's murderous streak, and so had her sister killed in a sacred temple. She was later captured by her sister's husband, who got his revenge by having her murdered.

Cleopatra IV

Ptolemy IX
116-110 BCE, 109-107 BCE, 88-81 BCE

CLEOPATRA SELENE I
Unusually, her killer was unrelated to the family line.

PTOLEMY X
110-109 BCE, 107-88 BCE
After many years of ruling as co-regent with his mother and then being deposed to switch places with his brother, Ptolemy IX, Ptolemy X had his indecisive mother killed and finally ruled in his own right.

PTOLEMY XII
C.80-58 BCE, 55-51 BCE
Struggling to maintain a grasp on his kingdom, he lost the throne to his ambitious daughters repeatedly. When he finally reclaimed it, he ensured that his daughter, Berenice IV, stayed quiet for good by having her beheaded.

Berenice III
81-80 BCE

PTOLEMY XI
80 BCE
Married Berenice III, his uncle Ptolemy X's wife. However, 19 days later, he had her killed. As a result, he was lynched by an angry mob.

Cleopatra V/VI

Arsinoe IV
48 BCE

BERENICE IV
58-55 BCE
Berenice IV most likely poisoned her powerful rival, Cleopatra V/VI, to become pharaoh. Reluctant to share power, she had her marriage cut short by having her husband, Seleucus VII, strangled.

Ptolemy XIII
51-47 BCE

CLEOPATRA VII
51-30 BCE
She certainly had her sister, Arsinoe, murdered. It is also likely she had her younger brother and husband Ptolemy XIV killed, as his mysterious death was very convenient for the ambitious ruler.

Ptolemy XIV
47-44 BCE

Julius Caesar

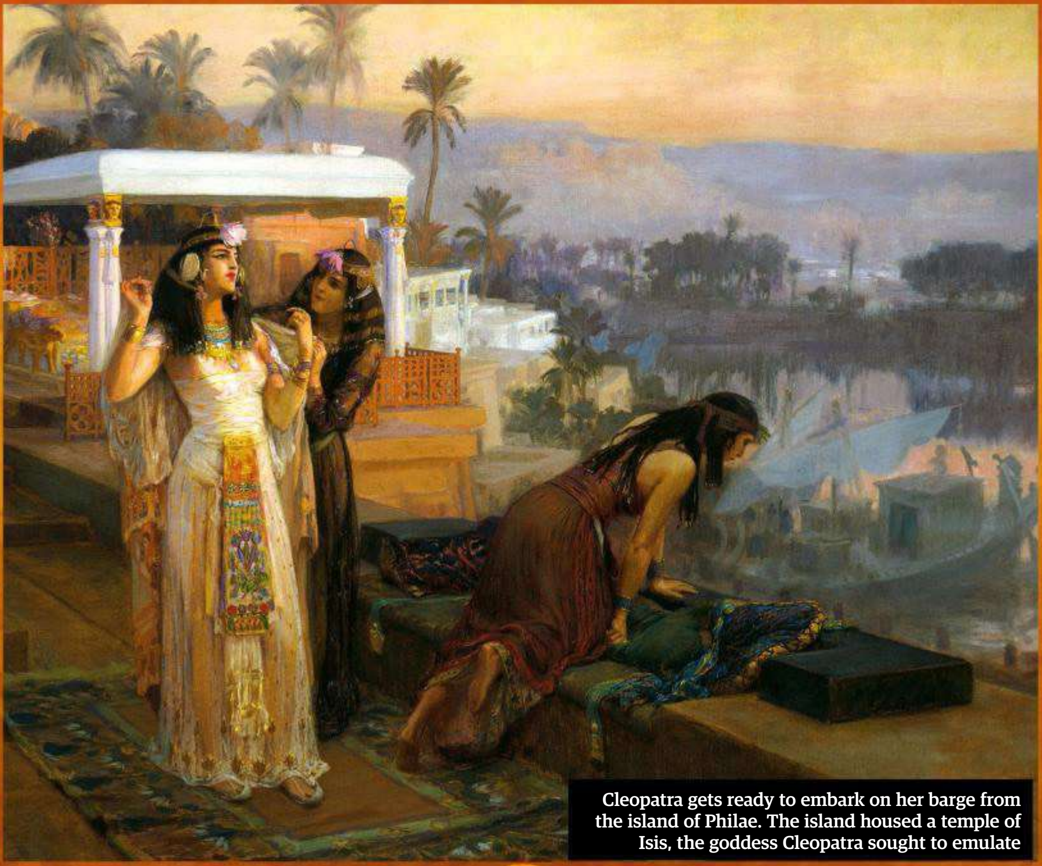
Mark Antony

Ptolemy XV 'Caesarion'

Alexander Helios

Cleopatra Selene II

Ptolemy Philadelphus



Cleopatra gets ready to embark on her barge from the island of Philae. The island housed a temple of Isis, the goddess Cleopatra sought to emulate

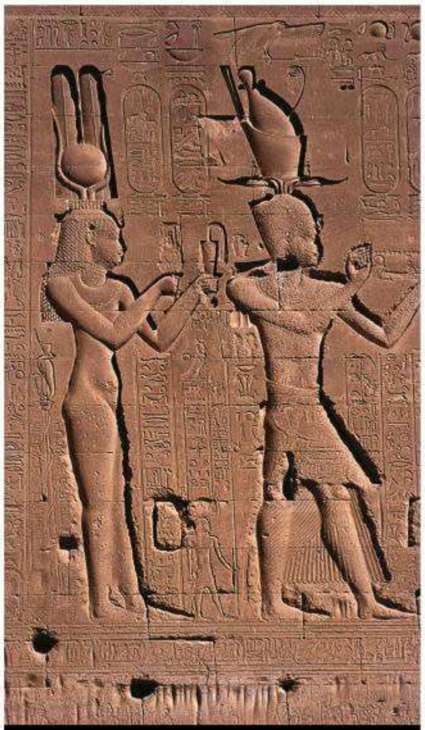
> "Antony, aligned with the most powerful and wealthy woman in the world, no longer feared his rival's power or needed his support"

Turkey in 41 BCE, his sights set on using her riches to assert his own power.

Cleopatra, however, was no fool. Although she was aware a union with one of Rome's most powerful leaders would be mutually beneficial, she sent out a clear message that she was not to be won over easily. She denied Antony's request for a meeting twice, and when she finally agreed to meet the headstrong man, she ensured she made a lasting impression. Cleopatra sailed from Egypt to Tarsus, and for the final part of her journey she travelled in a magnificent barge. The sight of her as she sailed up the river to meet Antony was astonishing. The gilded vessel boasted purple sails and silver oars that rowed to the gentle music of harps and flutes. The barge was heaving with exotic flowers, scented with perfume, as the lady herself reclined on deck, dressed as the goddess Venus and fanned by young boys, while beautiful maids dressed like sea nymphs sailed the boat.

The sight had its intended effect: Antony was infatuated with Cleopatra from the moment he saw her. He invited her for supper, to which she responded that he should be her guest instead. It was a mark of status, but Antony never said no to a woman. He was treated to a magnificent outdoor banquet illuminated by lights in the trees. The next day, Antony regained some of his male bravado and invited her to supper. He was determined to outdo her but was completely unable to match the magnificence of royal hospitality. However, Cleopatra wasn't interested in wealth – she was the richest woman in the world after all – the few men she had truly loved had all been brave, ambitious soldiers, and she found Antony's wild, impetuous side completely irresistible. She agreed to help him, but she would need something in return, something a soldier and not a civilian would understand – murder.

Arsinoe was Cleopatra's younger sibling; she had reigned over Egypt with their brother, Ptolemy XIII, but when Cleopatra returned with Caesar, Arsinoe was captured and exiled to the temple of Artemis. Despite this, Cleopatra still considered her a threat and wanted her eliminated. She asked Antony to do what Caesar could not and remove her sister once and for all. Antony, in desperate need of Cleopatra's money and completely enthralled by her charms, ordered Arsinoe's execution. In a gross violation of the temple



A relief on a temple wall depicting Cleopatra and Caesarion in Dendara, Egypt

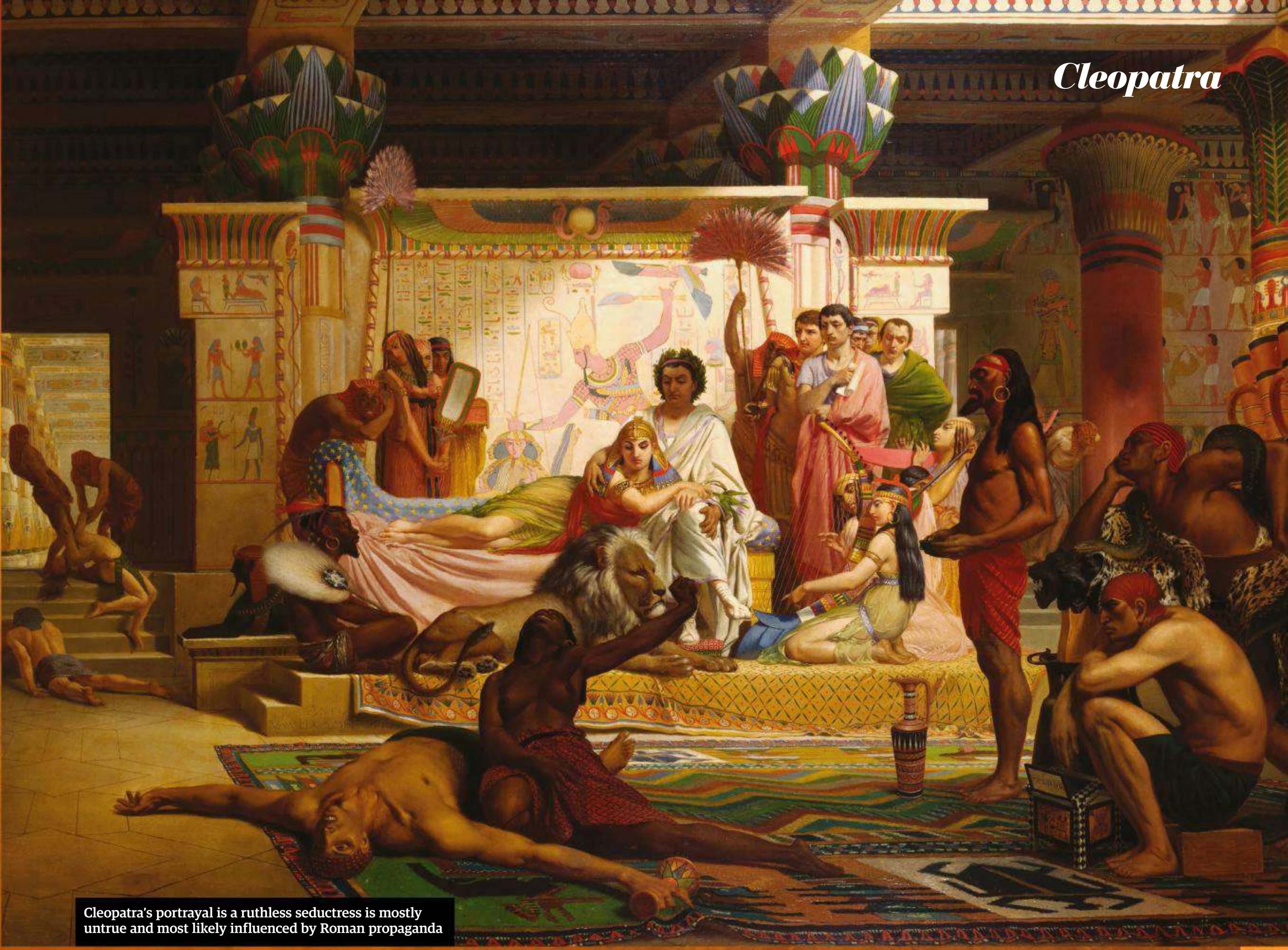
SON OF CAESAR

The child whose paternity began a conflict that would change the world

Caesarion was the ill-fated son of Cleopatra and, according to her, Roman legend and her ex-lover Julius Caesar. Although Caesar himself never officially acknowledged the child, the fact that he allowed his lover to name him after him is indicative that he knew his paternity. Details surrounding the boy himself are shrouded in myth and legend, but it was frequently commented that he bore resemblance to his father in manner and looks. 'Little Caesar' spent his early years with his mother and father in Rome, with Cleopatra eager that Caesar acknowledge his son and make him his heir. However, hopes for this vanished with the leader's assassination.

Cleopatra returned to Egypt with her beloved son, aged three, and as per tradition, he was named co-heir with his mother. The pharaoh was quick to weave her precious child into her propaganda, portraying him as the Horus to her Isis. This image of her son as a divine leader grew more prominent when Antony entered Cleopatra's life. Together they created the title 'king of kings' and Antony also declared Caesarion to be Caesar's true son and heir.

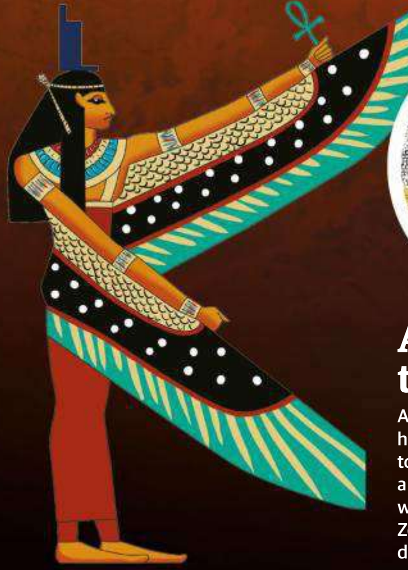
This act is likely what damned the boy when his mother's ships fled at the Battle of Actium. Efforts were made to smuggle the then 17-year-old Caesarion away to India, but through betrayal or trickery, he landed back in Octavian's hands. Facing such a direct threat to his power, and believing 'too many Caesars is not good', it is likely the emperor had the teenager killed, though exact details of his death have been lost to time.



Cleopatra's portrayal is a ruthless seductress is mostly untrue and most likely influenced by Roman propaganda

THE POWER OF THE GODS

Cleopatra identified herself with the goddess Isis - the healer who brought the dead back to life - and she wasn't alone. From the earliest recordings of humanity, divinity has been a claim to rule



Alexander the Great

Alexander not only presented himself as a god, he believed it too. He was convinced he was a descendant of the legendary warrior Achilles and the son of Zeus. He believed it was his divine destiny to defeat King Darius III.

Louis XIV

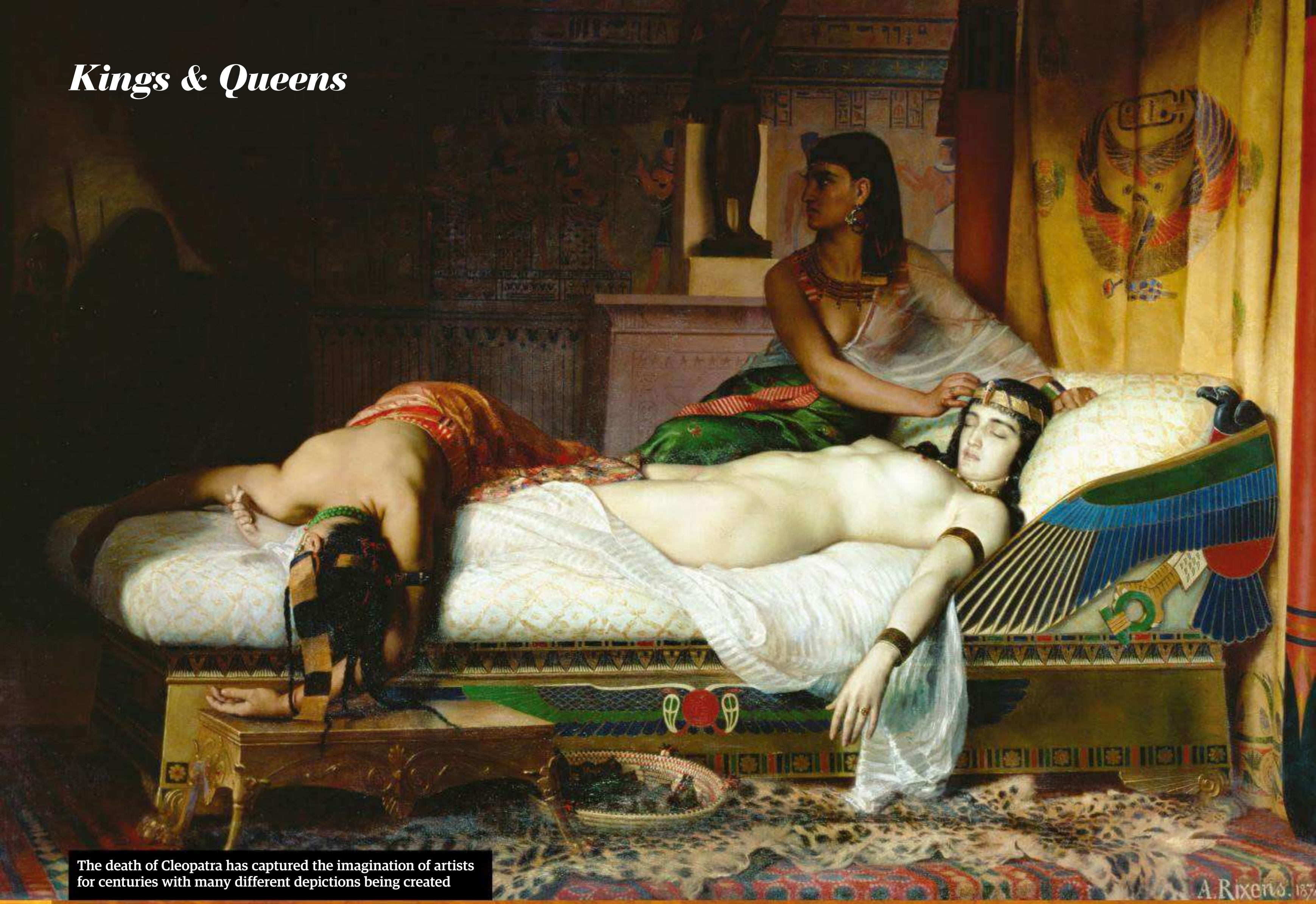
Regarded as a 'god-given' child, France's bourbon monarch modelled himself as the 'Sun-king' that all the planets rotated around. Louis often presented himself in artwork as a god-like figure, playing the role of Apollo, Neptune or, as in this image, Jupiter, the king of the gods.

Francois Duvalier

Also known as Papa Doc, the infamous president of Haiti used god-like associations not to inspire devotion, but fear. He attempted to imitate Baron Samedi, a vodou spirit. His propaganda even claimed that he was god himself.

Caligula

Although many Roman emperors claimed divinity, Caligula became infamous for the way he went about it. He dressed as various gods and demigods in public, referred to himself as a god and even demanded that residents and senators worship him as a living god.



The death of Cleopatra has captured the imagination of artists for centuries with many different depictions being created

sanctuary, and disgusting the vast majority of Rome, the woman was brutally murdered on the sacred steps. It would not be the last time Antony was willing to betray the rules of his state for the woman he loved.

This move impressed Cleopatra, and the two did not wish to be parted. They spent the winter of 41 BCE together in Alexandria, not only as allies, but as lovers. Having disposed of her troublesome brothers, Cleopatra was free to pursue the men she desired. Antony, on the other hand, was married to Fulvia, although she seemed far from his mind. In Cleopatra's company, Antony reverted back to his playboy youth, filling his days with lavish riches. Together the lovers played dice, drank and hunted. There are claims that at night they would dress as servants and walk around the city, knocking on doors and causing a nuisance with their frivolities.

Although a rich man, Antony had never experienced the extravagance of the palace. Together they formed a society known as the 'inimitable livers', which drank, celebrated and entertained to excess. One of the stories that has been passed down through history is that Cleopatra bet Antony she could spend 10 million sestertii on dinner, to which he accepted. She then had a modest, unremarkable meal, for which he mocked her. Then the pharaoh took a cup of strong vinegar and dropped one of her priceless pearl earrings into it, where it dissolved. This story originated some 100 years after the events and is unverified. However, the fact of its existence indicates the perception of the extravagance the couple enjoyed in Alexandria.

> "Cleopatra managed to defy Octavian's orders and escape this world, finally joining her beloved Antony in death"

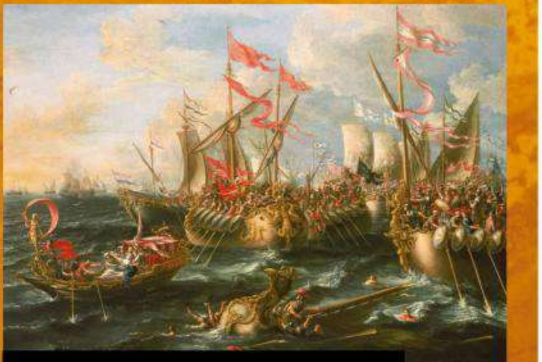
Meanwhile in Rome, Antony's wife Fulvia was plotting. In an extreme bid to force her husband away from his affair, she publicly declared herself and Antony in opposition to Octavian - a reckless action that would eventually escalate into a full-scale war. Antony was furious with his wife for arranging a war in his name, and he quickly returned to Italy to make amends with his fellow co-ruler, Octavian. Fulvia died shortly after, and Antony used this opportunity to marry Octavian's sister, Octavia, in a display of his allegiance. Antony was not ready for a war, not yet.

Cleopatra, meanwhile, was heavily pregnant with Antony's twins and gave birth two weeks later to Alexander Helios (the Sun) and Cleopatra Selene (the Moon). Despite having no option but to watch Antony marry another, she seemed unconcerned. She continued to give Antony the military resources and money he required, confident that no woman, not even the sister of the leader of Rome, could eclipse her. As usual, Cleopatra was correct.

Antony was beginning to have doubts about Octavian's loyalties and could not erase thoughts of his exotic beauty from his mind. In 37 BCE, he set sail for Syria with Octavia, who was pregnant at the time, but along the way he declared that his wife should go no further as he feared for her safety. Octavia returned to Italy while Antony diverted his course, following his heart back to Egypt. After four years apart, the two lovers were reunited. By now Antony had forgotten any allegiance he had to Octavian and, despite still being married to his rival's sister, he married the mother of his twins. A year later, another child was born.

The two quickly returned to the life of excess they had enjoyed. In 34 BCE, despite Antony's

Antony commissioned these coins to celebrate his victory in Armenia



Antony barely escaped Actium with his life, and he abandoned many of his ships

military campaign in Parthian ending in failure, the lovers celebrated a mock Roman Triumph not in Rome, but in Alexandria. They sat together on golden thrones surrounded by their offspring. For his grand finale, Antony finally let any guise of Roman loyalty fall away. He distributed lands held by Rome and Parthia to his new wife and their children, then in his most shocking move yet, proclaimed Caesarion, not Octavian, Caesar's legitimate son and true heir.

Rome was outraged. Antony, aligned with the most powerful and wealthy woman in the world, no longer feared his rival's power or needed his support, in fact, he was so confident in his victory that he had played his hand for all to see. For Cleopatra, this was the result of years of pragmatic power plays and investment – she had erased any allegiance Antony had to Rome, and he was now an Oriental lord. Ever the showman, she wrapped him in purple robes, draped him in jewels and thrust a golden sceptre into his hand. The queen of the Nile would need a king as splendid as her, and upsetting Octavian was exactly what she wanted to do.

In Rome, Octavian needed any excuse to rid himself of Antony and he seized his opportunity, depriving Antony of his powers and proclaiming him a man of low morals. Octavian worked relentlessly to turn public opinion against the man who had once been a hero, accusing him of "going

THE DRAMATIC DEATH OF CLEOPATRA

Professor Duane W Roller unravels the mummy of all myths

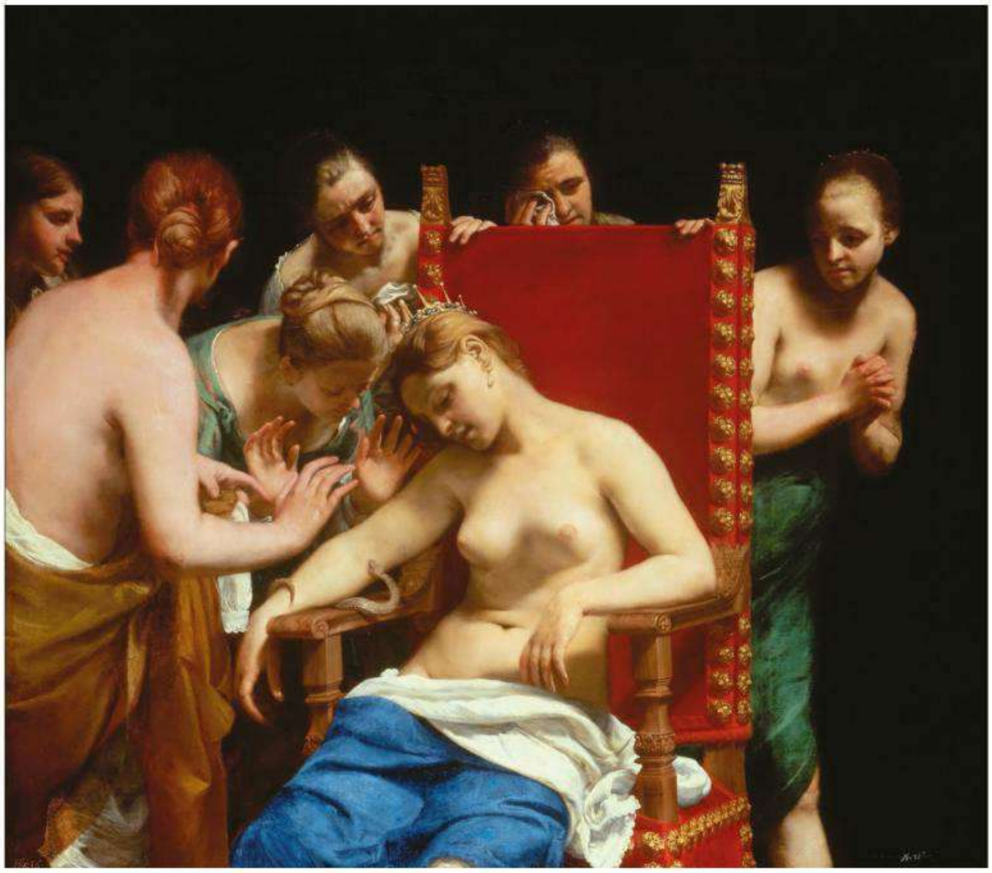
©Lenna K Roller

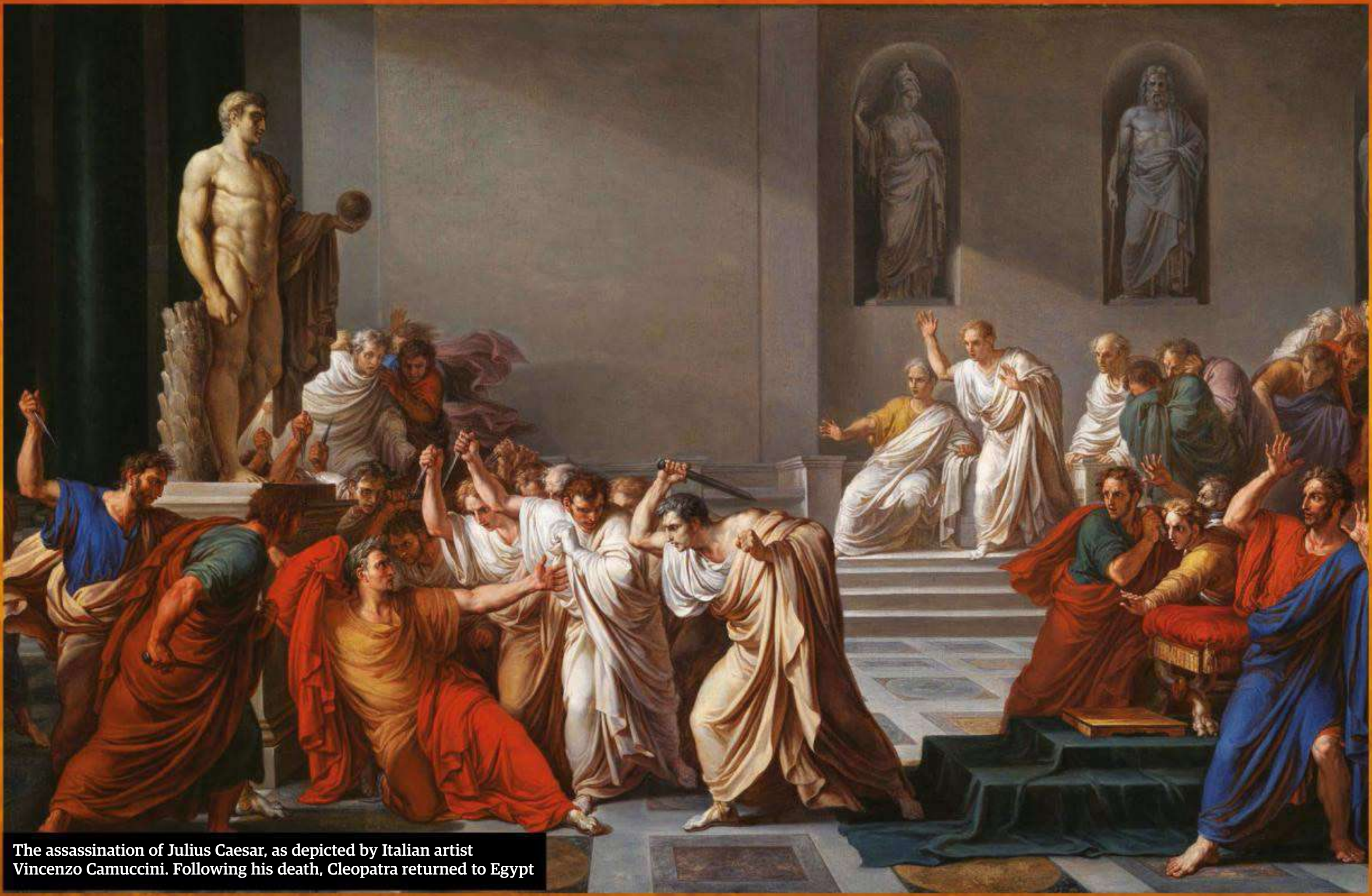
Why is there so much doubt regarding how Cleopatra killed herself?
Although the asp story was well promulgated within a year after her death, it was already being questioned by contemporary sources. It's a bizarre and unique way to go, which may be why it became popular and why it was questioned. Octavian certainly believed it (or wanted to), because of the triumph and the representation of her in the procession with the asps, but we have to ask: was this part of the drama or real? We know Cleopatra sent a note to Octavian just before she killed herself, but no one ever found it. Cleopatra may have had enough sense of the dramatic to suggest this unique way of death – a snake was an important symbol in Egyptian culture. From a modern point of view, herpetologists have said the asp method is questionable, because a bite, unless in a very sensitive place, is not necessarily fatal, and it seems odd Cleopatra would have chosen an unreliable method. Poison seems much more likely, but doesn't have the artistic and literary quality of the asp.

What was the significance of a snake in Egyptian culture?
Snakes are the ultimate fertility symbol (probably because they live in the earth – the source of all fertility), and were particularly connected with Isis, Cleopatra's alter ego. The traditional view of her with the uraeus and its snakes is accurate; she always appeared at state functions dressed as the goddess. Snakes have always had a particularly dynamic role in Mediterranean cultures, and Cleopatra would have been willing to use this as her last statement.

How accurate is Shakespeare's play *Antony And Cleopatra*?
The play is amazingly accurate, but of course is based on the sources, not the more careful analysis of Cleopatra we can do today. Shakespeare used Plutarch's biography of Antony, which is the best (and almost only) source we have on the queen, and even though he used an English translation of a French translation of the Greek, he follows Plutarch's account very closely, almost word for word in places, turning the narrative into drama. A close reading of the play shows Shakespeare makes most of the points about her ability that are lurking in the sources, but often have been ignored because of the view of her as a great seductress who drove men to their doom.

Cleopatra: A Biography by Duane W Roller is out now. Roller is professor emeritus of Classics at the Ohio State University.





The assassination of Julius Caesar, as depicted by Italian artist Vincenzo Camuccini. Following his death, Cleopatra returned to Egypt

native" - an especially heinous crime to Romans. However, he focused most of his attention on the pharaoh to avoid civil war, branding her a whore and a drunk.

For his part, Antony accused Octavian of being a social upstart, a usurper and even lying about his adoption by Caesar. Finally, Octavian declared war against Egypt and Cleopatra. He hoped that by omitting Antony from the war declaration he would not lend his forces to the queen, even summoning him back to Rome several times, but this was a foolish hope. Antony was Cleopatra's completely, and he immediately joined with his queen to fight the war that had been inevitable since the day they met.

Octavian's forces and the lovers' combined fleet met off the coast of Actium. If Antony and Cleopatra's forces could claim victory here, it would be a crucial step in forming their new united empire. However, for a reason known only to her, at the height of battle Cleopatra turned and fled with her ships. Antony, confused but utterly committed to his wife, followed her. This gave Octavian the perfect opportunity to invade Egypt. The self-proclaimed emperor ploughed through the country, and as he neared Alexandria, Antony's armies deserted to Octavian. Antony, consumed by his love for Cleopatra, had ignored a very crucial aspect of war - popularity. One woman, however powerful she was, could not win a war - but armies could, and his foe had them all.

> "At the height of battle Cleopatra turned and fled with her ships. Antony, confused but utterly committed to his wife, followed her"

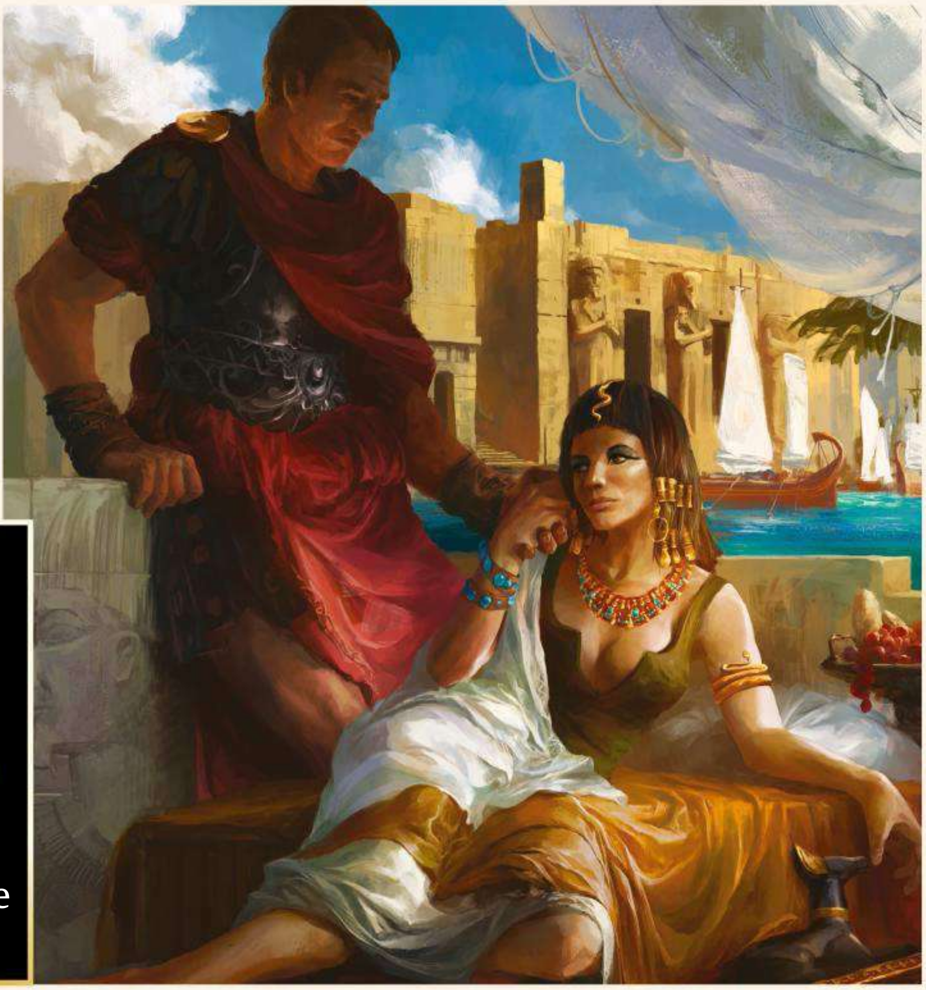
Antony was desperate. He attempted to seek refuge from the invading army in Alexandria, but found none. A rumour then reached him that Cleopatra had committed suicide and, believing it, Antony stabbed himself in the stomach to join his love. As he prepared to face death, he discovered the truth: Cleopatra was not dead at all, but hiding in her monument. Struggling for breath and desperate to see her one final time, Antony was carried to Cleopatra's side, and there, in her arms, he died.

Cleopatra, although genuinely in love with Antony, was not as rash as her husband. It was not until she became Octavian's captive and discovered her fate was to be paraded as a prize in Rome that she chose death. Octavian, acutely aware she may attempt suicide, had the pharaoh closely guarded. He wanted his victory, and he wanted his prize, but Cleopatra, driven and ruthless, was not going to give it to him. The tales surrounding the pharaoh's death are layered in myth, with the popular belief that an asp bit her on her breast. However she did it, Cleopatra managed to defy Octavian's orders and escape this world, finally joining her beloved Antony in death, and keeping her sacred pride intact.

Antony and Cleopatra's love had been borne out of mutual benefit - together they wished to rule a united world and claim ultimate power. Perhaps if it had remained a union of convenience, history may have taken a different path. However, a stronger, unrelenting force grasped control of both of them, and led to their demise - love. They had desired, most of all, to share their fate, and they did, in extravagance, in war, in victory, in death and ultimately, in history, for no two names are more intertwined than Antony and Cleopatra.

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW CLEOPATRA?

The femme fatale is surrounded by myth and legend, test your knowledge against the riddles of the Sphinx



Q. Cleopatra was renowned for her beauty

☐ True
☐ False

Correct answer: From what we know from the contemporary sources, Cleopatra wasn't traditionally beautiful at all – it was her charisma and intelligence that brought powerful men to her beck and call.

Q. How many languages did Cleopatra speak?

☐ 1
☐ 3
☐ 9

Correct answer: Most historians agree that the queen spoke between five and nine languages, including her native Egyptian.

Q. Cleopatra wrote a book about...

☐ Love
☐ Medicine
☐ History

Correct answer: Her treatise *Cosmetics* was concerned with pharmaceuticals, even offering remedies for hair loss.

Q. Cleopatra was a ruthless seductress

☐ True
☐ False

Correct answer: Liaisons between royals were very common in the era. The reason Cleopatra became infamous was because she did not hide the paternity of her children. As far as we know, she only had two relationships in 18 years.

Q. Cleopatra was a Roman citizen

☐ True
☐ False

Correct answer: Although it's not confirmed, it was common practice to offer citizenship to allied leaders. Mark Antony would have most likely ensured that Cleopatra was a fully certified Roman citizen.

Q. During her reign, Cleopatra was able to:

☐ Rescue Egypt's economy
☐ Gain the Egyptian people's respect
☐ Elevate Egypt's power

Correct answer: Roman propaganda would attempt to display otherwise, but in fact, all of the above is true. Cleopatra was a very astute, capable and beloved ruler, able to protect and expand her empire in the most dangerous and trying of times.

Q. She died from an asp bite

☐ True
☐ False

Correct answer: We do not know for certain what Cleopatra used to poison herself. She was known to carry poison in her hair combs, leading some to believe she administered the drug via a pin – not a snake.

Q. Which of these Roman fashion statements did Cleopatra adopt after her time in the city?

☐ Roman hairstyle
☐ Pearl jewellery
☐ Neither

Correct answer: It was actually the other way around: Cleopatra popularised these styles in Rome and they were adopted by so many Roman women that it is a common misconception that it was Rome that made them fashionable.

King Louis XIV of France

The Sun King was both a shining beacon and a dangerously disruptive force

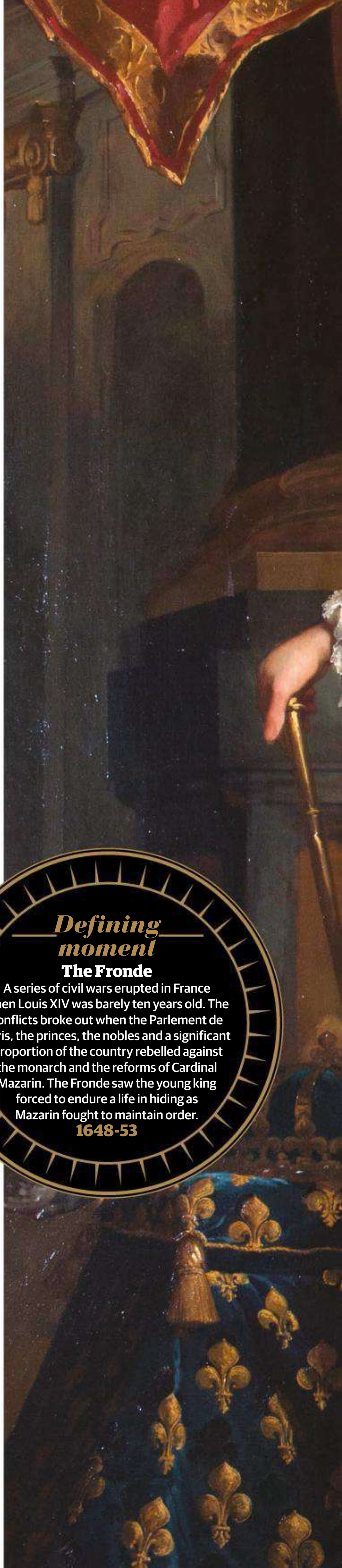
For a man that would become France's longest serving monarch, the young Louis spent almost two decades of his reign without a shred of power. From the tender age of four, he sat beneath the wing of his mentor, Cardinal Jules Raymond Mazarin. The Italian papal minister formed a strong bond with the king-in-waiting, overseeing his education and reinforcing two distinct principles – that the nobility of France were a dangerous faction that had to be kept in check, and that the sovereignty of the crown should be absolute. These were principles shared by the other key figure of Louis's early life – his mother, Queen Anne of Austria.

During his childhood, a civil war known as The Fronde erupted across France – a conflict that saw the disenfranchised nobility, the lawmakers of the Parlement de Paris and the people of France themselves band together to overthrow Anne and her pitbull of a first minister. Mazarin had levied high taxes in order to slow the growth of the Parisian population and the nation as a whole, but it had only served to anger the people. France had also been locked in the Thirty Years' War with Spain for the best part of 13 years, and its continued commitment to the conflict had ground down to a financially ruinous stalemate.

With this in mind, Anne and Mazarin took drastic action with a single goal – consolidating power in the crown for Louis's true ascension. France soon signed a treaty with Spain, the Peace of Westphalia, which saw it officially recognise the sovereignty of the other nations within Europe. It was the formation of an alliance of royal self-determination with each nation involved officially recognising the right of each ruler to control their own kingdom. The treaty effectively shredded the power of the French parliament and the nobility, but this bold move to consolidate Louis's future would nearly tear the country apart.

For the next five years, the young king would find himself bundled into the shadows. His country was at war with itself and he, the linchpin of his protector's machinations, was a target constantly under threat. He was smuggled out of Paris multiple times during the troubles and sometimes forced to live in hiding like a pauper as the conflict raged on. Those leading the revolt were the Frondeurs, political rebels who were opposed to Mazarin and Anne, but their ultimate lack of desire to remove Louis from the throne saw the revolt fizzle out as the young king came of age.

When Mazarin died in 1661, Louis's true reign had finally begun. Now in control of France, Louis's

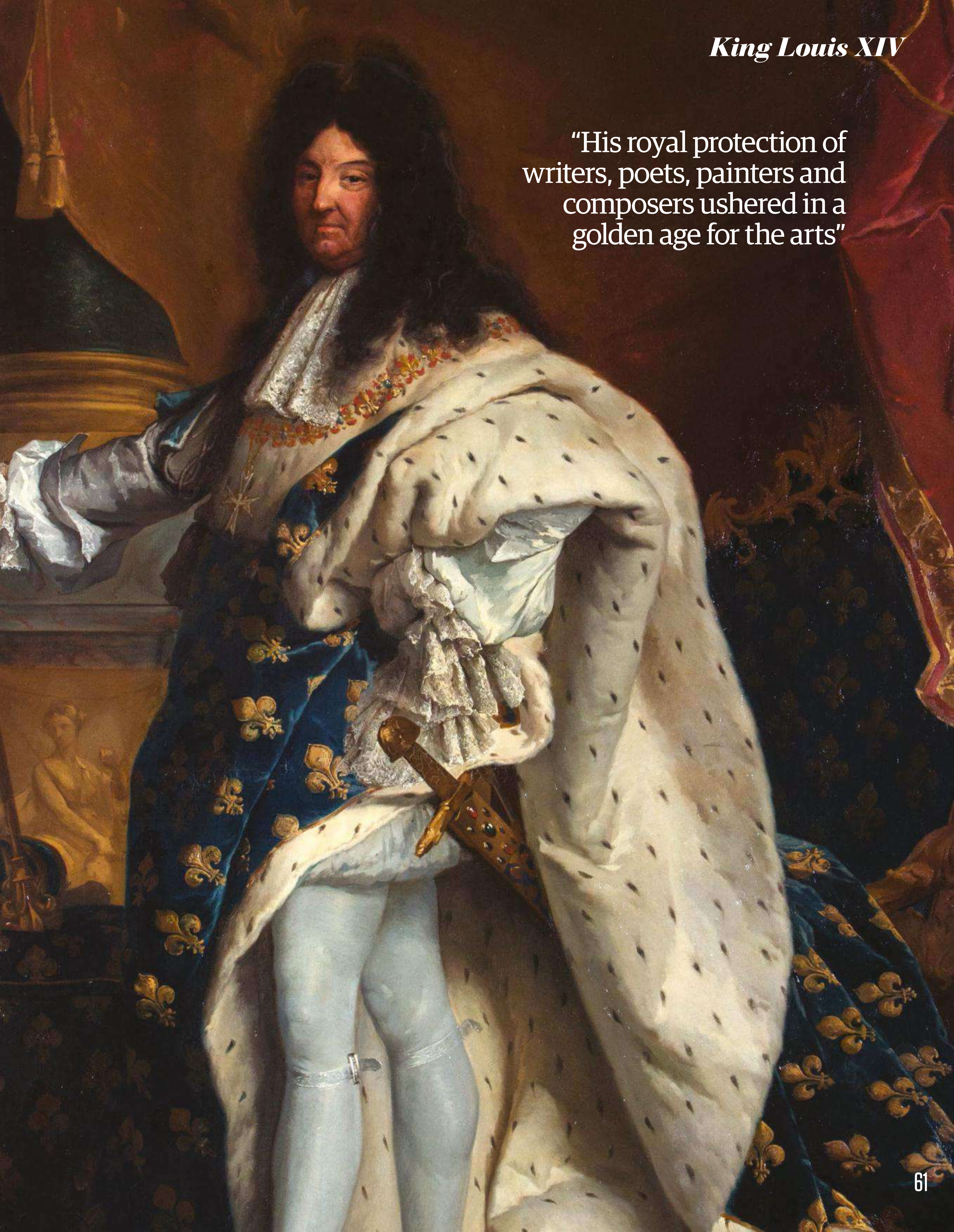


Defining moment

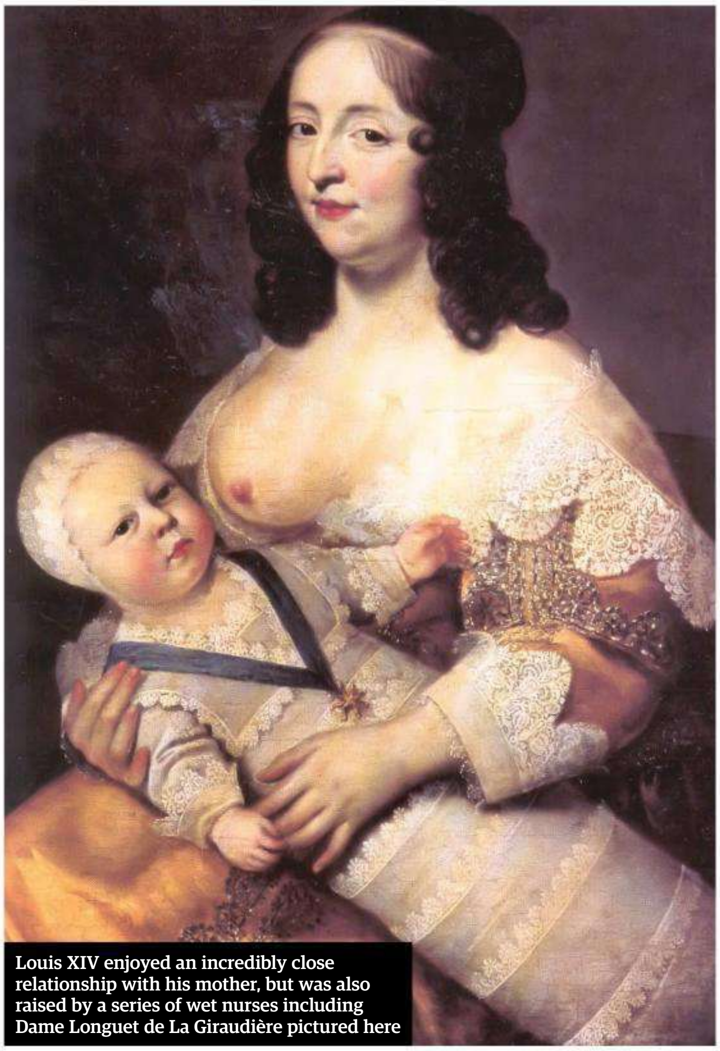
The Fronde

A series of civil wars erupted in France when Louis XIV was barely ten years old. The conflicts broke out when the Parlement de Paris, the princes, the nobles and a significant proportion of the country rebelled against the monarch and the reforms of Cardinal Mazarin. The Fronde saw the young king forced to endure a life in hiding as Mazarin fought to maintain order.

1648-53



"His royal protection of writers, poets, painters and composers ushered in a golden age for the arts"



Louis XIV enjoyed an incredibly close relationship with his mother, but was also raised by a series of wet nurses including Dame Longuet de La Giraudière pictured here

Defining moment

The expansion of the Palace of Versailles

When Louis assumed absolute control of the crown in his early 20s, the young monarch knew the popularity and political influence of the crown was waning in Paris, so he moved the seat of French power to Versailles. Not only was the expansive Palace of Versailles a grand architectural statement, it represented an explicit statement of the king's absolute rule.

1661-1710

character began to form. He shocked every minister and politician in Paris by imprisoning Mazarin's successor, corrupt finance minister Nicolas Fouquet following a three-year-long trial, and then declaring himself his own first minister. He had made a very public statement to his subjects: I am the king, and my rule is absolute.

This self-assurance was Louis in his purest form – a man who saw himself as the centre of his realm in all matters. It was a quality that manifested itself as selfishness and defiance in the early years of his reign as he began openly dismantling many of the policies enacted by Mazarin and his mother. Louis was a true reformist monarch, one that relished the desire to oversee all aspects of his nation. He was also a debauched creature, one who embraced wine, women and excess with wanton abandon, but he proved early on he was a shrewd soul who refused to be cajoled by his ministers.

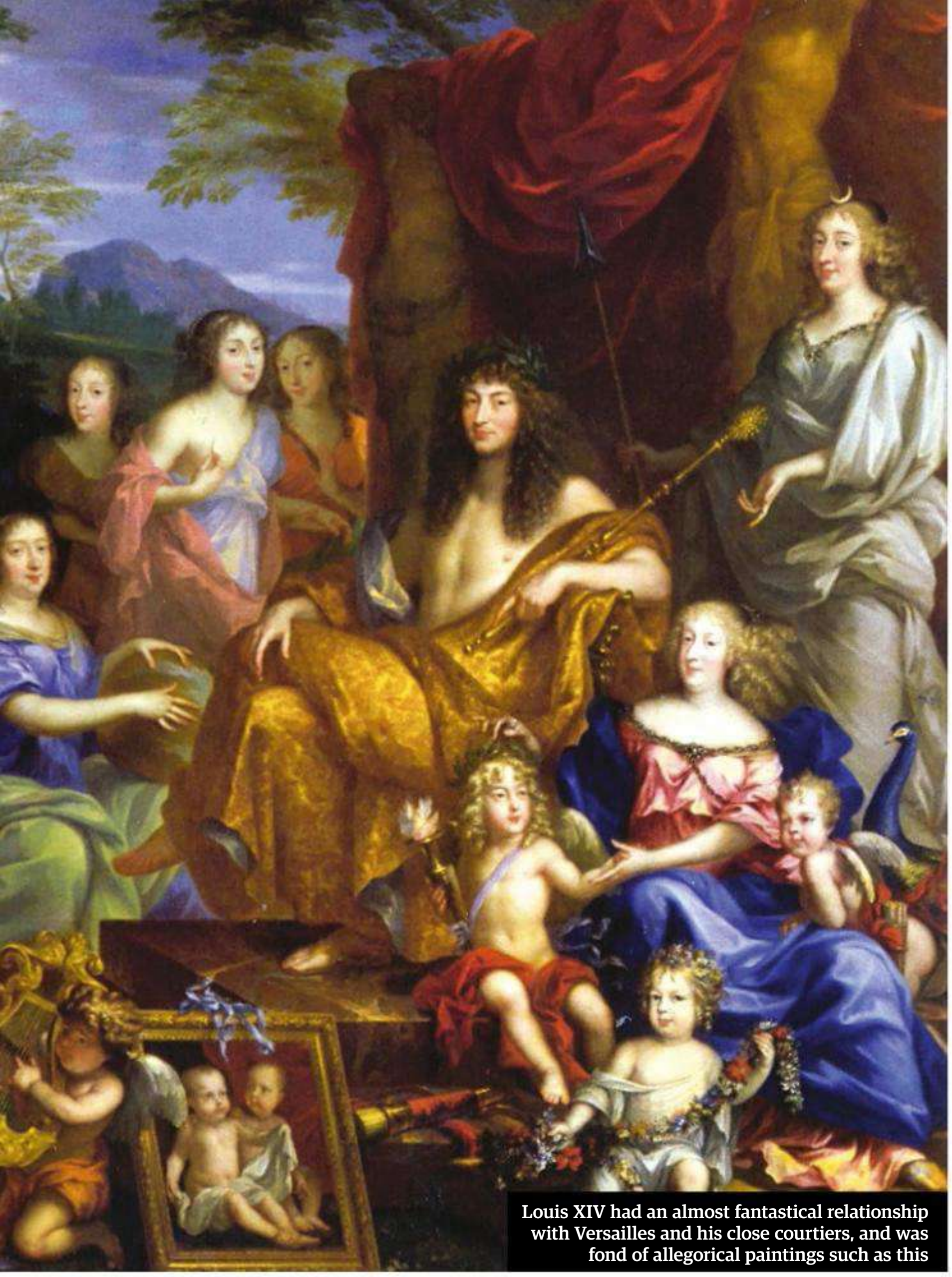
In the decade that followed, Louis began reforming French law and practices with a never-before-seen fervour. With Fouquet removed, he appointed Jean-Baptiste Colbert as controller-general of finances in 1665 and oversaw the reduction of the national debt through a much more efficient approach to taxation. Another surprising move was his decision to make all nobles exempt from taxes – it seemed ludicrous to the common man, but it was a stroke of political genius. The nobility were now totally bound to the whim of the king, having to prove their status without angering the crown.

Louis wasn't willing to bow to any section of his kingdom, especially those that had revolted against his protectors in his youth, but the endlessly confident and self-assured monarch understood that a balance would need to be established. He knew ministers in Paris believed that they were above the king's edicts, so he upended their machinations by unofficially moving the political seat of power to Versailles, a simple royal hunting lodge that Louis revitalised into an opulent palace to rival any in Europe. Eventually the true seat of power would be moved from Paris to Versailles as Louis literally re-sculpted the kingdom around himself.

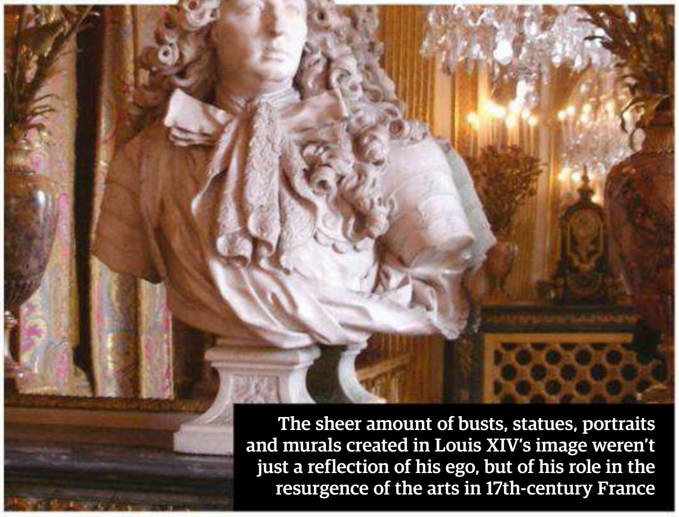
He also made a controversial decision on something that many of his predecessors had ignored – supporting a key component of the fast-forming middle class of France. By building the Hôtel national des Invalides in Paris, which served as a hospital and retirement home for French war veterans, Louis was one of the first French kings to use royal influence to acknowledge and protect those that had sacrificed so much in his family's name. Whether it was a solely political move or one made out of Louis's own compassion, it made a growing faction of the burgeoning bourgeoisie a powerful new supporter.

His reforms also extended to the cultural, as a result of his own passion for sculpture, theatre and literature. During his rule, Louis brought the Académie Française under his patronage and used it to turn Versailles into the cultural epicentre of Europe. His royal protection of writers, poets, painters and composers ushered in a golden age for the arts – soon everything from fashion to dance choreography was influencing the entire continent. Louis wanted to become the Sun King, the source of all light, and his efforts were paying off.

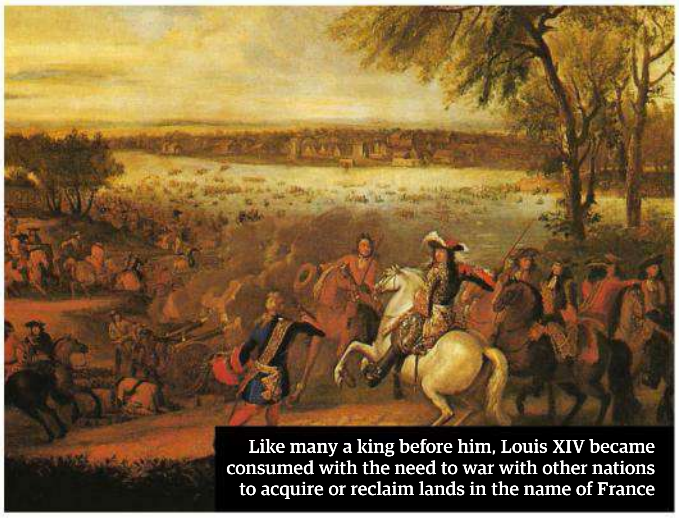
For the first half of his reign, Louis's actions as king of France were informed by his hunger to establish both himself and his kingdom as the dominant power in Europe. As such, the French monarch wasn't willing to be held at bay by the Peace of Westphalia that had secured the end of the Thirty Years' War. France had been too long under the heel of England, Spain and the Holy Roman Empire. France needed to reassert itself – and that meant war.



Louis XIV had an almost fantastical relationship with Versailles and his close courtiers, and was fond of allegorical paintings such as this



The sheer amount of busts, statues, portraits and murals created in Louis XIV's image weren't just a reflection of his ego, but of his role in the resurgence of the arts in 17th-century France



Like many a king before him, Louis XIV became consumed with the need to war with other nations to acquire or reclaim lands in the name of France

> "He ruled for an incredible 72 years – the longest reign of any European monarch"

As a warring monarch, the darker and more aggressive side of Louis was brought to the surface. He funded France's involvement in the War of Devolution (1667-68) over control of the Spanish Netherlands, France's power base – it ultimately proved a tactical failure when England, Sweden, Spain and the Holy Roman Empire united against him, but it worked wonders for his national image. By directing the conflict from the front line, Louis solidified his image as the proverbial Sun King in the minds of both his soldiers and the people back home.

Defining moment

War of the Grand Alliance

Louis XIV's reign can often be characterised by an endless need to reiterate the power of the crown and France's place within the ever-evolving political arena of early modern Europe. The War of the Grand Alliance, fought between France and the other great powers of Europe, was another expression of the monarch's refusal to appear weak in the face of any kind of threat.

1688-97

That hunger for greater status led Louis to a renewed conflict that proved far more fruitful in the form of the Dutch War (1672-78). The Sun King wanted the Spanish Netherlands and he was willing to do anything to acquire them. The war nearly bankrupted the kingdom, but it bolstered the realm with new lands and territories and the confirmation of France's ascension in the political theatre of Europe. Those same desires drove him to the War of the Grand Alliance (1688-97), in which all the major powers of Europe rose up to halt France and Louis's hunger for more territory.

In his later years, Louis XIV's character went through something of a transformation, and with it so did the state of the realm. While devout from birth, his religious leanings began to radicalise and it was here that his Catholic upbringing took hold. France was a Protestant nation (and a poorer one for all Louis's wars), but the monarchy was absolute, so Louis imposed the same reform in the religious sphere that he had used elsewhere. He revoked the Edict of Nantes, issued by his grandfather Henry IV in 1598, which had granted freedom of worship and other rights to French Protestants (Huguenots). He then razed Protestant churches to the ground and created a culture of fear that drove Protestants in their thousands out of the country in exodus.

On 1 September 1715, Louis XIV succumbed to gangrene at his palace in Versailles. He ruled for an incredible 72 years – the longest reign of any European monarch in history – and in that time the man on the throne left a lasting impression on the kingdom. He revitalised France, rebuilding the economy and fortifying the nation as the dominant military power in Europe. But he lost the people he gained as the resplendent and opulent Sun King, forcing religious reform in a time where spiritual diversity had barely found an equilibrium.

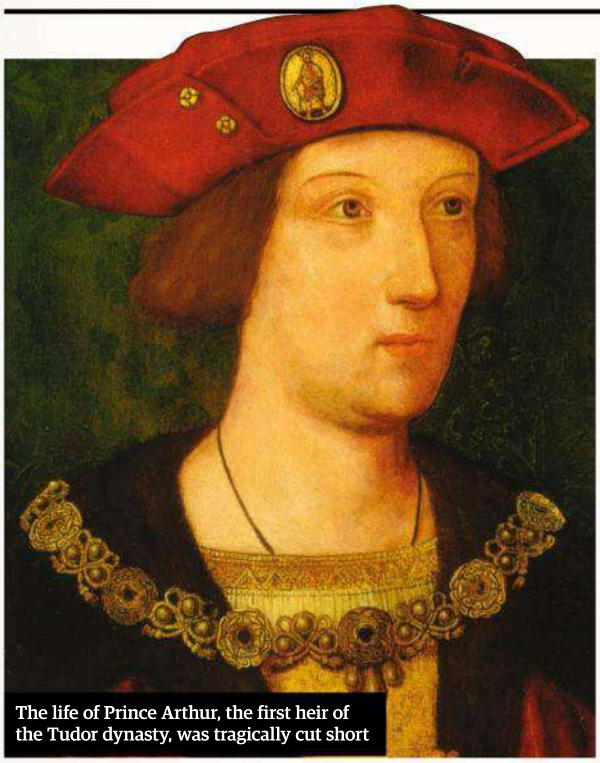
If Louis XIV was guilty of one thing, it was an unrelenting need to shed weakness. From consolidating his personal rule to needless territorial wars, the Sun King was a man who shaped France by the nature of his desires.

© Alamy

THE TUDOR KING ARTHUR

& 7 OTHER LOST MONARCHS

Death, swords and deposition: get acquainted with the would-be kings that changed the course of history



The life of Prince Arthur, the first heir of the Tudor dynasty, was tragically cut short

History is riddled with 'what ifs', and with the benefit of hindsight, it is easy for those of us living in the 21st century to speculate what could have been. Nowhere is this more true than in the case of the monarchy: when kings and queens have died, been displaced, killed or otherwise, we are often left wondering what might have happened if things had turned out differently. This is also the case with royal heirs - the sons, daughters, nephews, nieces and so on who could, and often should, have become king or queen, but through a cruel twist of circumstance had their inheritance snatched away.

In 17th century England, for example, the population eagerly anticipated the succession of James I's heir, the cultured Prince Henry. Unfortunately the prince was carried off by typhoid fever in 1612. Thus when James died, he was succeeded by his younger son, Charles I, who embroiled the country in the Civil War of 1642. Elsewhere, when the sultanate of the Ottoman Empire was abolished in 1922, Mehmed VI's son, Prince Mehmed, was forced into exile with his father, his chance of ruling thus being eliminated. Such was the cruel hand that fate had dealt them, and they were not alone. Here are some more examples of people who could, should, and would have become king.

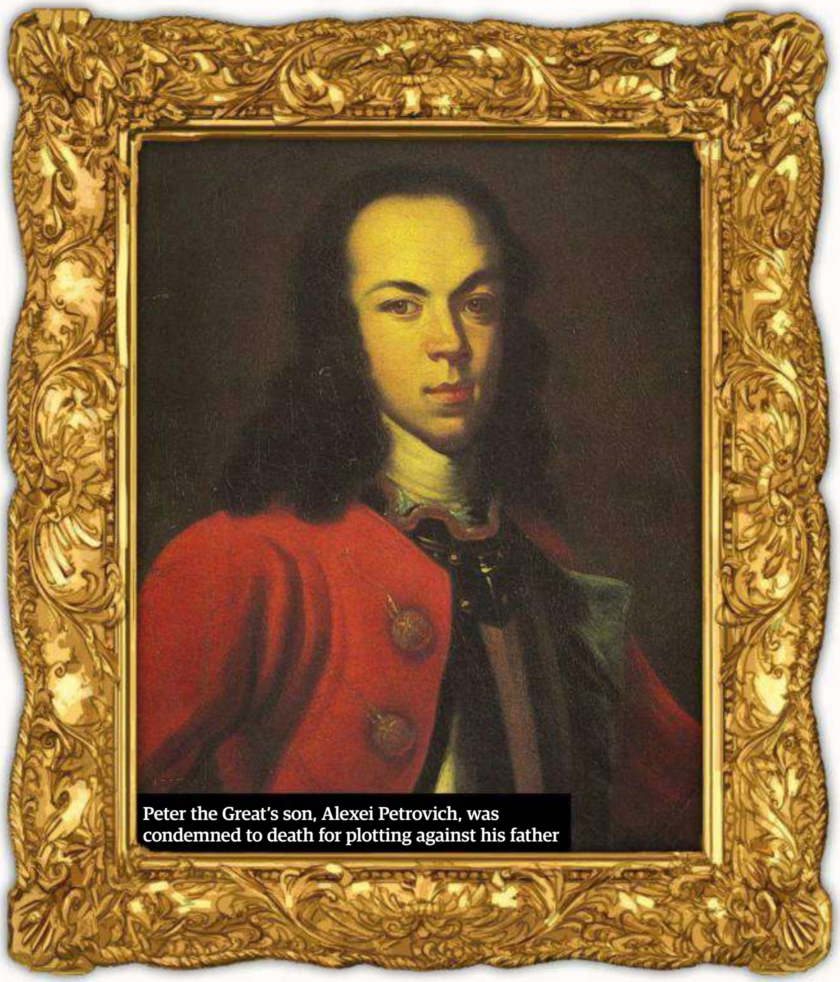
PRINCE ARTHUR (1486-1502)

Arthur, the first-born child of Henry VII and Elizabeth of York, was born in September 1486. His birth of was of the utmost importance, for he was the heir of the newly established Tudor dynasty. Not only was Arthur named after the legendary king, but he was also born in Winchester, a deliberate choice of his father's, influenced by Arthurian legend. In 1489 Arthur was created Prince of Wales, and was idolised by his parents. He was raised with every expectation of succeeding his father, and was given a magnificent education befitting a Renaissance prince. He excelled in his lessons, and many of his contemporaries also thought him handsome.

Henry VII had planned a marriage for his heir, and on 14 November 1501 Arthur was married to Catherine of Aragon, the youngest daughter of Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile. The question of whether or not the marriage was ever consummated has been hotly debated for centuries, but the likelihood is that it was not. Nevertheless, the couple were sent to establish their household at Ludlow on the Welsh Marches, where Arthur was to learn the art of government. It was here that the couple fell ill in March 1502: Catherine recovered, but Arthur did not. He died on 2 April, leaving his parents devastated. His younger brother Henry replaced him as his father's heir.

IF THEY WERE KING

Arthur was expected to emulate his famous 'ancestor', the great King Arthur, and become one of history's legendary kings. He was of gentle temperament, and certainly did not possess the fiery disposition of his younger brother, Henry VIII. Had Arthur survived, then it is likely he would have remained married to Catherine of Aragon, thus the Great Matter and the break from the Church of Rome would have been avoided. More interestingly, Anne Boleyn would not have become as well-known as she is today.



Peter the Great's son, Alexei Petrovich, was condemned to death for plotting against his father

ALEXEI PETROVICH (1690-1718)

The Russian Tsarevich Alexei was brought up with an intense dislike for his father, Peter the Great, which was highly influenced by his mother. The feeling of dislike was mutual, and in 1716 Alexei fled to Austria in fear of his life. He was lured back to Russia with the promise that his father would not punish him, but was instead forced to renounce his rights to the Russian throne, arrested and tortured. On 26 June 1718 Alexei was dead, either submitting to wounds from torture or secretly killed on his father's orders, on the grounds that he had allegedly plotted to kill Peter.

IF THEY WERE KING

Alexei did not have the same strength of character as his father, and was constantly complaining. He was also lazy and feeble, with no interest in politics. He would have been a weak ruler who was easily manipulated.

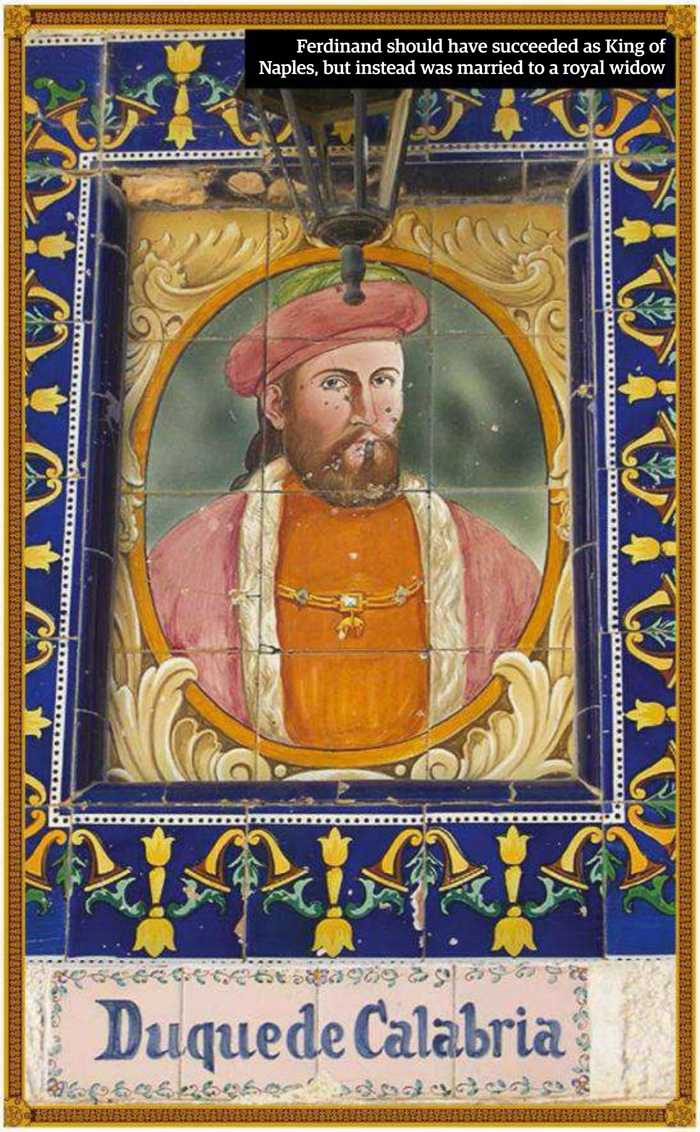
FERDINAND, DUKE OF CALABRIA (1488-1550)

Ferdinand was styled Duke of Calabria and Apulia from the time of his birth, and was raised with every expectation of succeeding his father, Frederick of Naples. In 1501, however, Frederick was deposed during the Italian Wars following an alliance between France and Aragon. Ferdinand was taken hostage and was held in Barcelona, but he was treated well. He also managed to win the friendship of King Ferdinand II of Aragon, and retained the favour of Ferdinand II's heir, Charles V. Charles thought so highly of his prisoner that in 1526 he arranged for Ferdinand to be married to Germaine de Foix, the widow of Ferdinand II of Aragon. The couple established themselves in Valencia, where they became patrons of the arts. Despite his royal status, Charles V clearly did not perceive Ferdinand as a threat.

> "Ferdinand was taken hostage and held in Barcelona"

IF THEY WERE KING

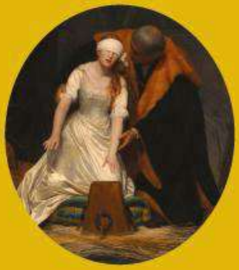
Ferdinand was evidently a very personable man, for he managed to earn the friendship and trust of both Ferdinand II of Aragon and Emperor Charles V. Had he succeeded his father as King of Naples, then his kingdom would undoubtedly have continued to be a part of the Italian Wars, and, faced with the might of the Holy Roman Empire, it is certainly possible that like his father before him, he would have been deposed.



Ferdinand should have succeeded as King of Naples, but instead was married to a royal widow

PREPARATION: THE KEY TO SUCCESS

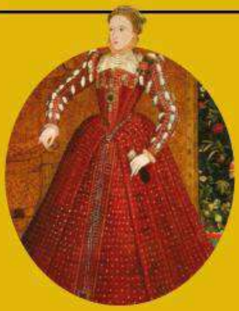
Top tips for would-be heirs



BE SEEN

For anyone with a claim to the throne who hoped to inherit, it was important that the subjects of the realm see him or her. Regular public appearances helped to boost popularity – after all, when Lady Jane Grey succeeded, nobody cheered because few people knew who she was.

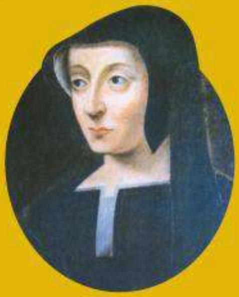
Left: Lady Jane Grey's claim to the throne was unpopular, and her life ended on the block



LOOK THE PART

Image was everything: if you were going to rule, it was important that you looked like royalty. Clothes and jewels were an essential part of this, and did much to project an image of majesty – the Tudors and Stuarts were particularly fond of using jewels to impress.

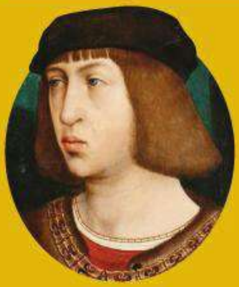
Left: Image was of the utmost importance to Elizabeth I, who spent lavishly on finery



CHOOSE FRIENDS (AND ENEMIES) WISELY

It was useful to have friends in high places at court who were placed to pass on information, and to guide you when you succeeded. Similarly, it was wise to keep your enemies close and on side until such time as you could dispose of them.

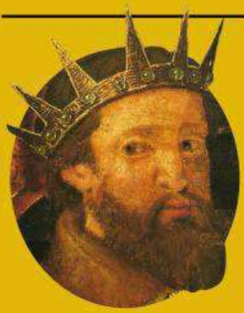
Left: Francois I's mother, Louise of Savoy, was active on her son's behalf during his predecessor's reign



MAKE A GOOD MARRIAGE

If chosen correctly, the right marital partner could enhance your own power and position as heir, as well as adding to your wealth. They could also be a powerful supporter – Joanna 'the Mad's husband Philip, for example, pressed for his wife's succession to the throne.

Left: Philip the Handsome, husband of Joanna 'the Mad', fought for his wife's rights



CREATE YOUR LEGACY

While preparing for the possibility of succeeding, think about the way in which you want to be remembered by history and how this will influence your actions if you become king or queen. Pious, like Martin I 'the Ecclesiastic' of Aragon, or perhaps intelligent like Alfonso X 'the Learned' of Castile?

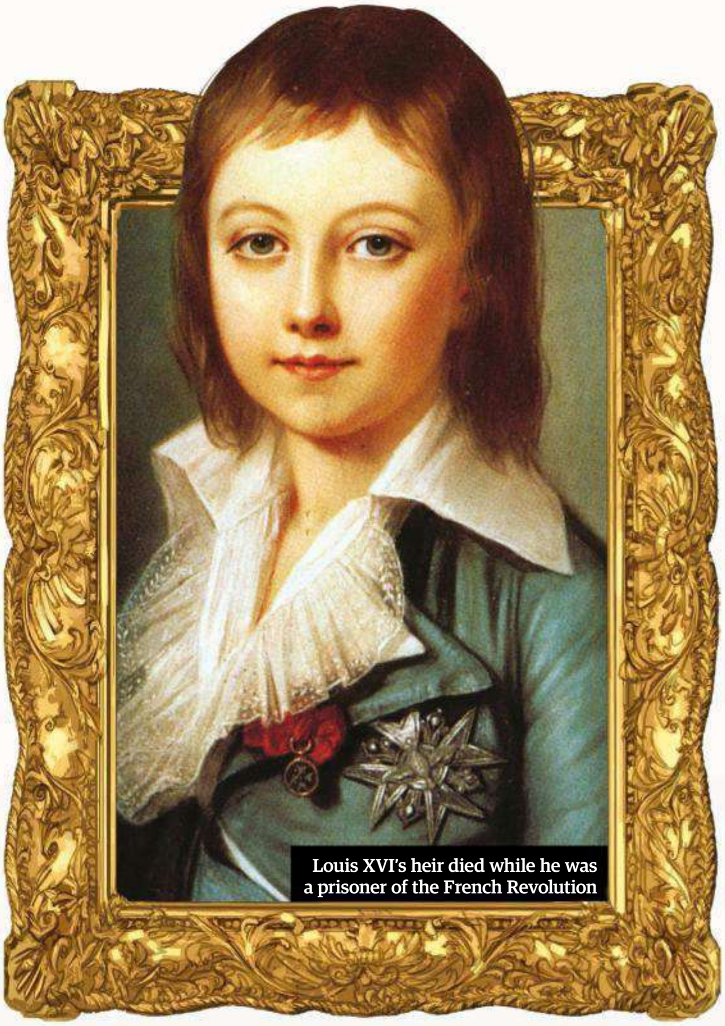
Left: History has remembered Martin of Aragon as 'the Ecclesiastic'

LOUIS XVII (1785-1795)

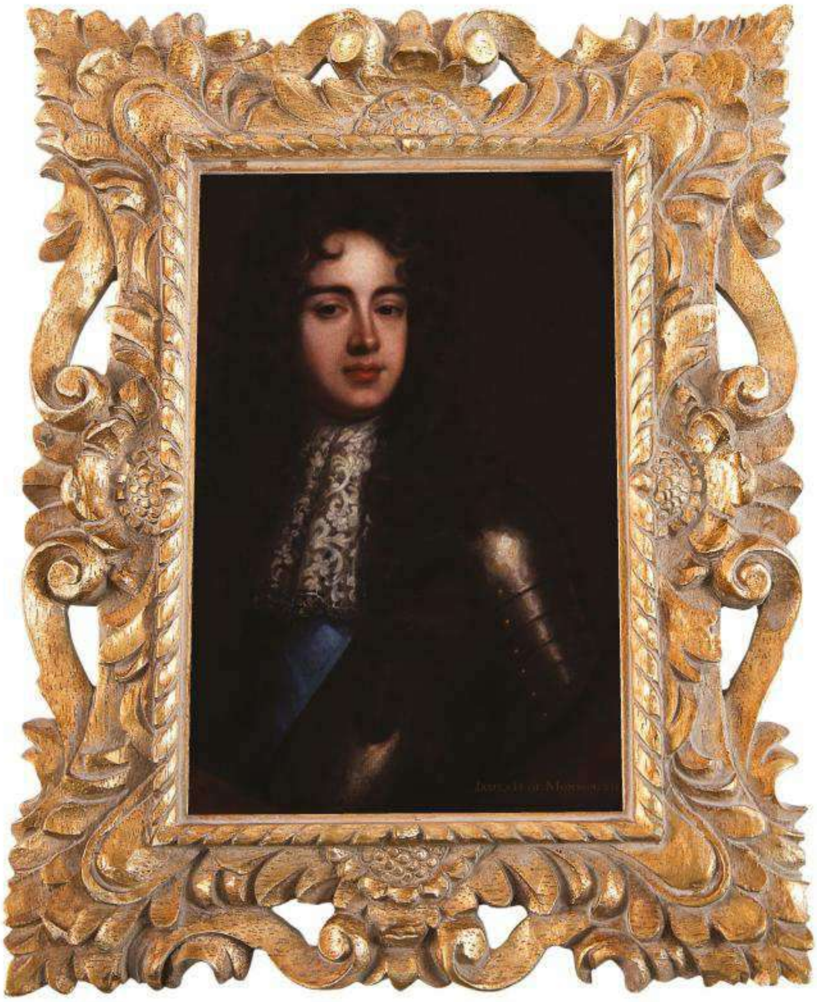
Louis XVII was in the almost unique position of having the title of a king, but never actually having ruled. Louis was the second son of the ill-fated Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette, but upon the death of his elder brother he became his father's heir. As the heir to the throne Louis enjoyed a privileged lifestyle, but that was all about to change. In 1789 the French Revolution erupted, and King Louis and his family were imprisoned in the Tuileries Palace in Paris. They were allowed to remain together, but after a failed escape attempt in 1791, the conditions of their imprisonment became gradually harsher. In January 1793 Louis XVI was executed, and thus the title, although not the power, of king became invested in the young Louis. Later that year the young Louis was separated from his mother, and on 8 June 1795, the young boy died of scrofula. He was still a prisoner.

IF THEY WERE KING

Given that the French Revolution had led to the establishment of a republic, had Louis XVII lived he would almost certainly have remained imprisoned. However, had he been given the opportunity to rule, it is likely he would have been a puppet king. As a youngster, he would have been ruled by a regent, and beyond this, he would still have been faced with many problems, for France was in a perilous state and it would have taken someone with real leadership qualities to tackle this.



Louis XVI's heir died while he was a prisoner of the French Revolution



JAMES, DUKE OF MONMOUTH

(1649-1685)

The eldest of Charles II's acknowledged illegitimate brood of children, James's mother was Lucy Walter, one of Charles's earliest mistresses. Although James was duly honoured by his father and was created Duke of Monmouth, in Charles's mind there was never any question of his son becoming king. James had other ideas, however, and maintained that he possessed evidence that his parents were married, thus giving him a claim to the throne – evidence that he never produced. When Charles II died and was succeeded by his brother James II in 1685, James responded by leading a rebellion against his uncle. Proclaiming himself king in several English towns, he marched his army towards Sedgemoor where the two armies met and fought on 6 July. His forces were defeated, and Monmouth was captured and taken to the Tower of London. He was executed in an appalling display of butchery on 15 July.

IF THEY WERE KING

Had Monmouth either succeeded his father or successfully deposed his uncle James II, the Glorious Revolution that saw King James toppled from power in 1688 would never have taken place. England would have remained a Protestant country, and as Monmouth had two sons who also produced children, the line of succession would have continued to flow directly. Like his father, Monmouth was both popular and promiscuous, and would perhaps have earned a similar reputation to Charles II.

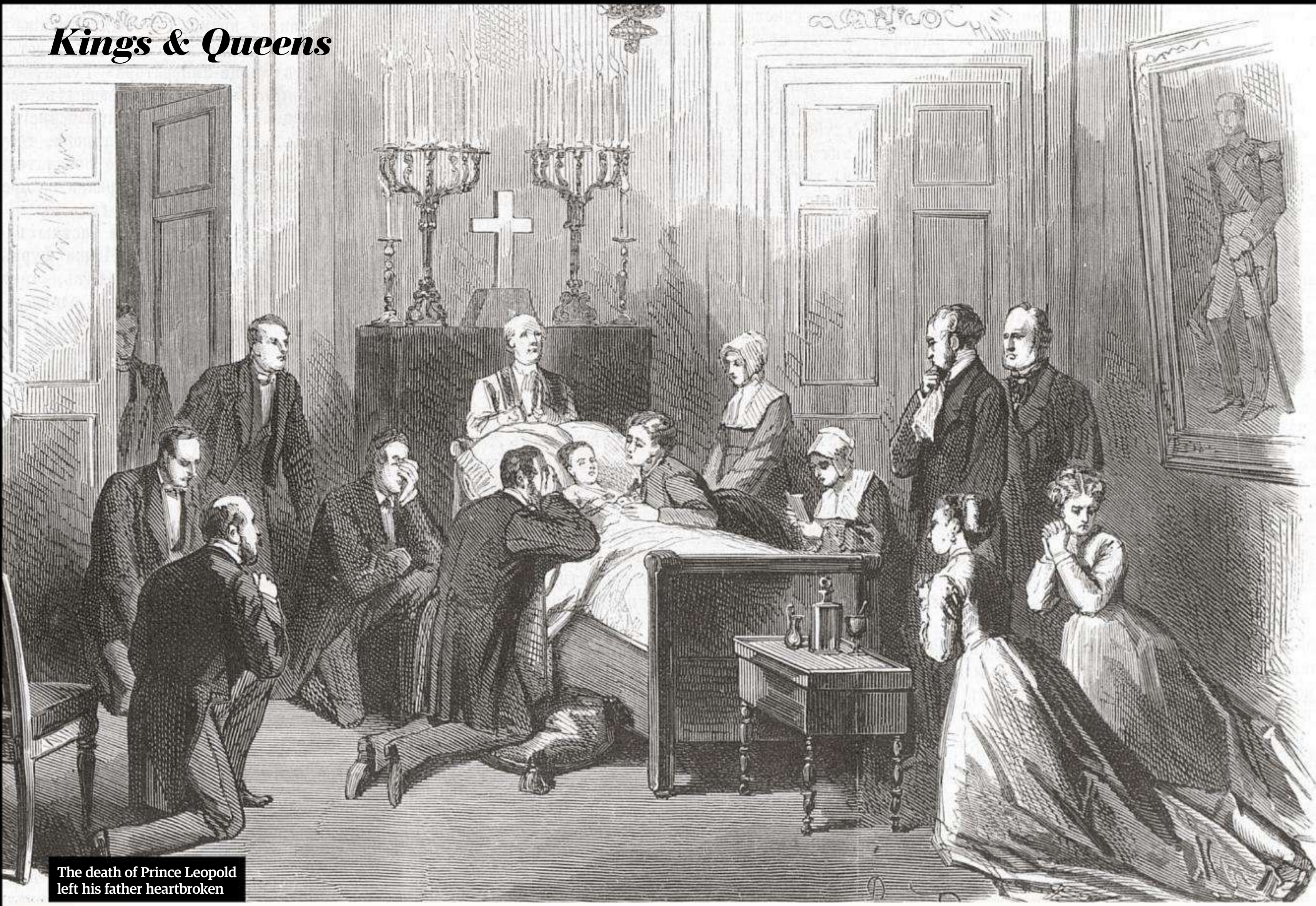
ARCHDUKE FRANZ FERDINAND (1863-1914)

The assassination of Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, is commonly believed to have been the trigger for the outbreak of World War I. Franz Ferdinand had been heir to the throne since 1896, and had every expectation of succeeding. He lacked the common touch, however, and many of the policies that he intended to impose upon his succession were unpopular. So unpopular, in fact, that The Black Hand, a group of Serbian terrorists, planned to assassinate Franz Ferdinand during his visit to Sarajevo on 28 June 1914 in order to prevent his policies from ever being implemented. On that day, Gavrilo Princip shot both Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie as they were driven through the streets of Sarajevo.

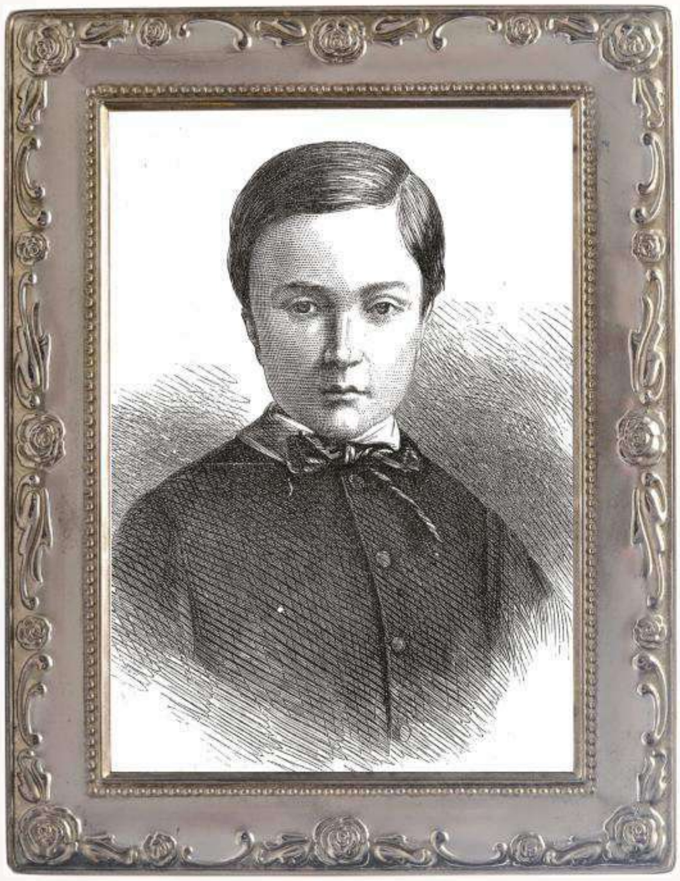
IF THEY WERE KING

Had Franz Ferdinand become king then he would doubtless have begun implementing his unpopular policies, chiefly for 'Trialism', the idea of a triple monarchy that would include the empire's Slavs. This, coupled with his general unpopularity, may have led to other assassination attempts.

The Austro-Hungarian heir was shot dead in the streets of Sarajevo



The death of Prince Leopold left his father heartbroken



LEOPOLD OF BRABANT (1859-1869)

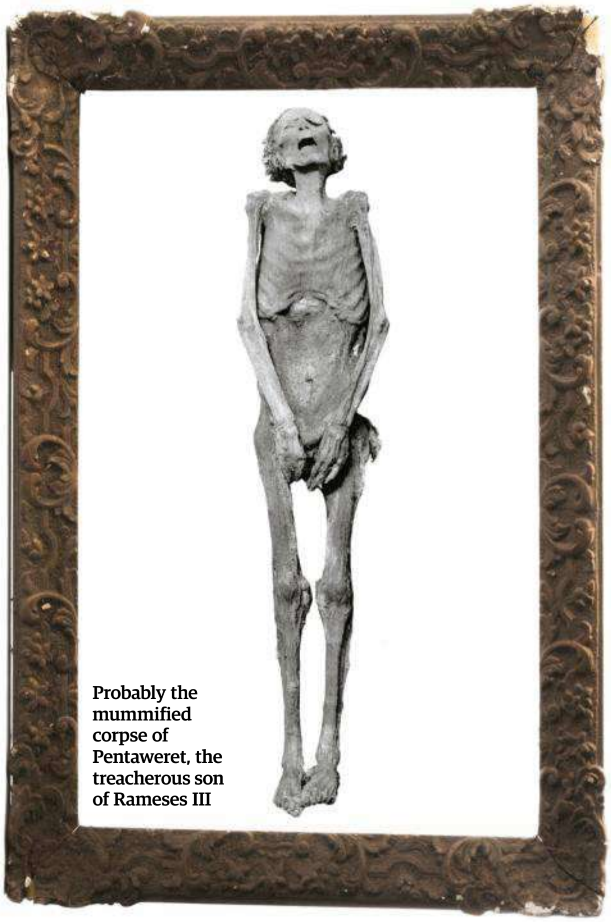
Leopold was the only son of Leopold II of Belgium and his wife, Marie Henriette of Austria. As his father's only son and heir, Leopold was a precious commodity, and his birth had been a cause of great joy both to his parents and in Belgium. His parents had no more sons, and thus all of their hopes were firmly invested in Leopold.

Sadly, when he was nine years old, he had an accident and fell into a pond. He did not drown, but he fell dangerously ill with pneumonia. Despite the best care, young Leopold succumbed and died. His father was devastated, and in a heartbreaking public display, broke down in uncontrollable sobs beside the little boy's coffin.

> "As his father's only son and heir, Leopold was a precious commodity"

IF THEY WERE KING

Leopold's father had made a fortune from his atrocities in the Congo, which served to severely damage his reputation. Had his son survived, it is possible that he would have avoided exploiting the Congo, and thus would have been more popular.



Probably the mummified corpse of Pentaweret, the treacherous son of Rameses III

PENTAWERET (C.1173 BCE-1155 BCE)

The son of the Ancient Egyptian Pharaoh Rameses III and one of his wives, Tiye, Pentaweret was involved in the Harem Plot to kill his father. When it became known that he was not his father's nominated heir, he was encouraged by his mother to seize the throne by force. However, the plot was discovered, and Pentaweret was tried and condemned for treason. The exact nature of his death is unclear, but he may have been forced to take his own life by drinking poison.

> "When it became known he was not his father's nominated heir, he was encouraged by his mother to seize the throne by force"

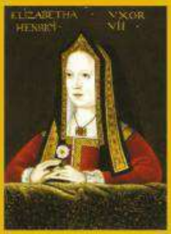
IF THEY WERE KING

The Harem Plot had the support of many of Rameses' courtiers, who evidently believed that Pentaweret had all of the ingredients that were necessary in a successful monarch. However, the rule of Pentaweret's father had witnessed the economic decline of Egypt and had been faced with several invasions. Thus Pentaweret would have inherited some significant challenges, and in the absence of more evidence about his character, it is difficult to ascertain exactly how he would have gone about dealing with these.

KINGS OVER QUEENS

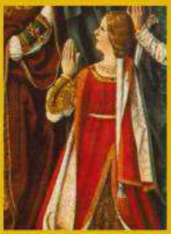
For hundreds of years, male rulers have been viewed as preferable to females. In France, a male ruler was not only preferable but compulsory, as the Salic Law banned a woman from inheriting the throne. There were many reasons that a male ruler was perceived to be the better choice, including the long-standing belief that women were inferior to men, and were not capable of governing effectively. It was not until the reign of Elizabeth I in England – a reign that was generally believed to have been successful – that this idea began to be challenged. Unlike Elizabeth however, there were many princesses before her who were not given the opportunity to rule.

ELIZABETH OF YORK (1466-1503)



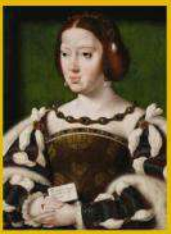
History may have run a very different course, had the mother of Henry VIII and co-founder of the Tudor dynasty been allowed to succeed in her own right. The Plantagenet dynasty would have continued, and one of the biggest mysteries may never have taken place: the disappearance of Elizabeth's brothers, the Princes in the Tower.

ISABELLA OF ARAGON (1470-1498)



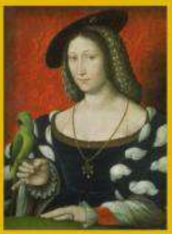
Isabella was the eldest daughter of Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabella of Castile. Until the birth of her brother John in 1478, she was her parents' heir presumptive. She was first married to Alfonso, the King of Portugal's heir, and following his death Isabella married Manuel I of Portugal. She died in childbirth – a queen consort, but not a queen regnant.

ELEANOR OF AUSTRIA (1498-1558)



The most powerful man in 16th century Europe, the Emperor Charles V, was Eleanor's younger brother. Eleanor would become queen consort of Portugal and France, although her political influence was minimal. She was famous for her charitable deeds, and as consort performed the task of mediator admirably on many occasions.

MARGUERITE D'ANGOULEME (1492-1549)



Marguerite was the elder sister of the French King, Francis I, and was later married to Henry II of Navarre. Marguerite was well known for her interest in religious reform, and had a significant influence on the Reformation in Europe. She was also a great patron of the arts and an author in her own right, most notably of poetry.

BLOODY MARY ON TRIAL

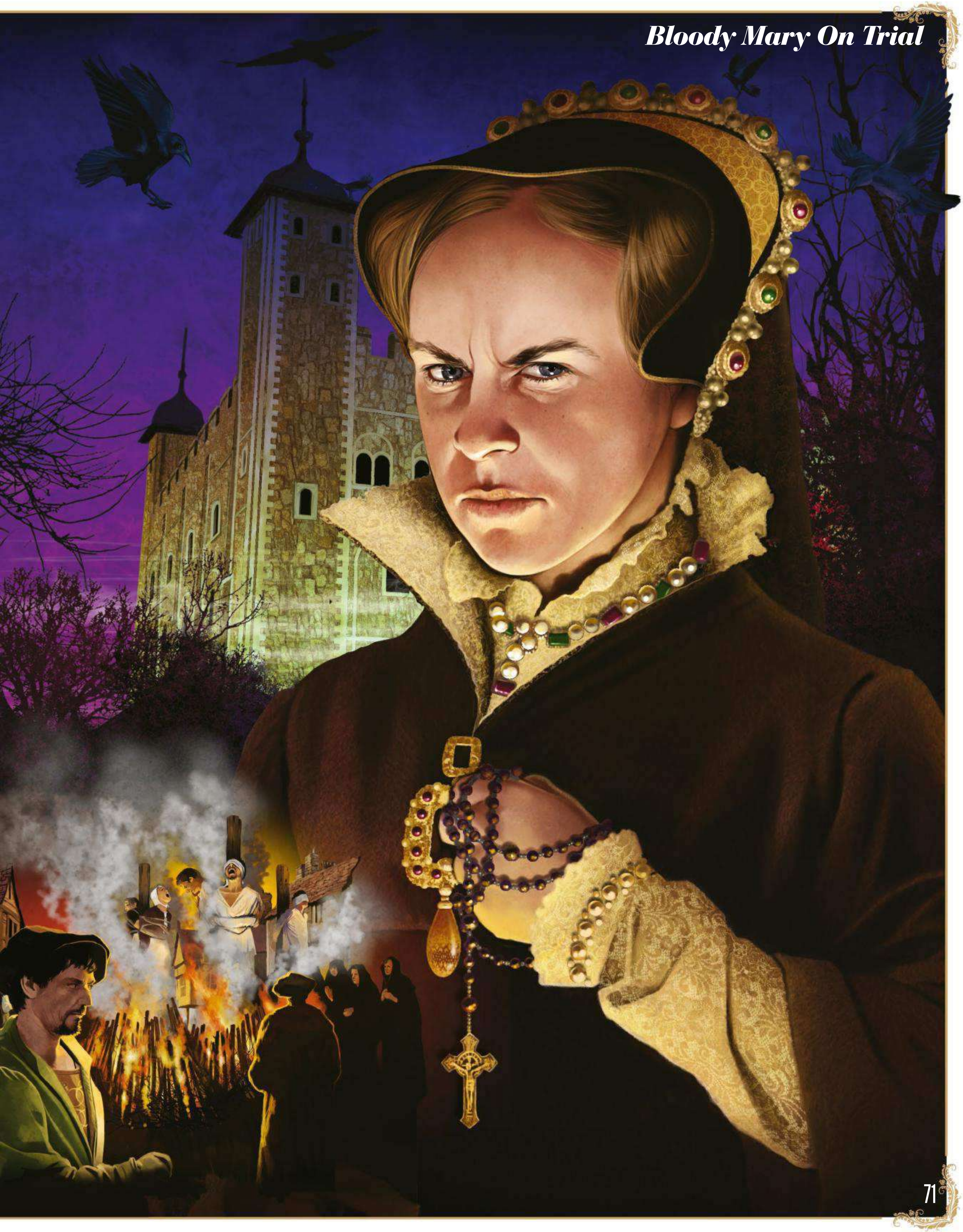
Henry VIII's deadliest daughter or victim of Protestant propaganda?

When a princess was born to Henry VIII and his wife, Katherine of Aragon, on 18 February 1516, the royal couple were overjoyed. Named Mary, she was to be the couple's only surviving child, and as such her parents doted on her. Nevertheless, she was not the male heir that her father desperately needed to succeed him - a circumstance that would prove to be pivotal not only in her life, but in the life of all English citizens. However, for the first years of her life, Mary's childhood was a happy one. She was brought up surrounded by all the luxurious trappings of royalty, and was given a splendid Renaissance education befitting her status. She was an able pupil, and particularly excelled in languages.

In 1527, Mary's happy family life was shattered when her father loudly declared his intention to separate from her mother. He had fallen in love with one of the queen's ladies, Anne Boleyn, and Henry was certain she could give him what Katherine could not: a son. This was to be the start of the unhappiest period of Mary's life, and the effects on her would be permanent. As Henry began proceedings to have his marriage annulled in order to marry Anne, both he and his new love treated Mary with increasing unkindness.

Despite being separated from her mother, Katherine's strength gave Mary courage and, in the face of persistent bullying from the king, both mother and daughter refused to bow to his demands. They refused to acknowledge that Katherine and Henry's marriage had been invalid, making Mary illegitimate. This angered Henry greatly, and caused a rift between father and daughter that was to continue for many years. On top of this, the effect that the psychological stress had on Mary was staggering: she suffered from bouts of ill health, and her emotions were in constant turmoil. Her father was unmoved by the fragile state of his daughter, and as the years passed and the annulment proceedings dragged on, life showed no signs of improving for Mary. "Few other women in the world of her rank ever lived more wretchedly," a Venetian ambassador would later remark.

In January 1533, Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn, who was pregnant, were secretly married. Shortly



after, having endured seven years of frustration during which time the pope refused to annul his first marriage, Henry's authority as supreme head of the Church of England was formalised in parliament. In May, the king's archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer, officially declared his marriage to Katherine to have been null and void: Mary was now formally disinherited. Neither Mary nor her mother accepted this pronouncement, but there was little that either of them could do.

On 7 September, much to the king's disappointment, Anne Boleyn gave birth to a daughter. Named Elizabeth, her birth had profound consequences for the 17-year-old Mary, and the seeds of the half-sister's turbulent relationship were sown here. Shortly after Elizabeth's birth, Mary's household was broken up and she was sent to join the household of her infant sister at Hatfield, where Anne Boleyn's aunt, Lady Shelton, supervised her. To make matters worse, on 23 March 1534, the Act of Succession was passed through parliament, legally disinheriting Mary and depriving her of the title princess. From now on she was to be referred to as the Lady Mary.

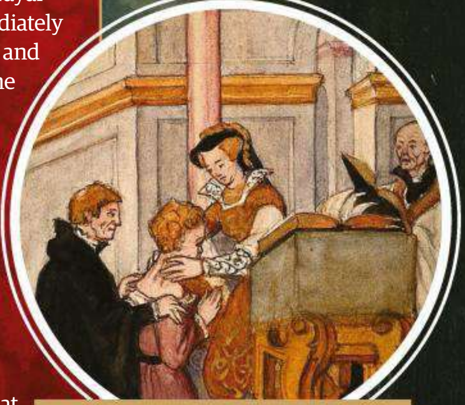
> "There is no doubt that Mary's tumultuous childhood had caused deep and permanent scars"

Throughout this time, Mary clung to her Catholic faith, which gave her strength and brought her comfort. She was frequently plagued by ill health, yet she still refused to acknowledge Anne Boleyn as the queen of England. This caused Anne great frustration, and she ordered her aunt to "box her ears as a cursed bastard" if Mary continued to refer to herself as princess, but it did not come to that.

Worse was to come for Mary, when, on 7 January 1536, her mother died. She was distraught, and fell ill shortly afterwards. Anne Boleyn was elated, but her triumph was short-lived. On the day of Katherine's funeral, Anne miscarried a child that had the appearance of being male. Like Katherine before her, Anne had failed to produce a living son, and the king's patience was exhausted. In May, Anne was executed on trumped-up charges of adultery and incest, and, like her sister before her, Elizabeth was declared illegitimate.

At the end of the month, the king married for a third time, taking as his wife one of Anne's ladies, Jane Seymour. Unlike Anne, Queen Jane was sympathetic to Mary, and through her efforts, father and daughter were reconciled. But it came at a cost: Henry demanded that Mary acknowledge him as supreme head of the Church of England, and admit that her mother's marriage had been, "by God's law and man's incestuous and unlawful," making herself illegitimate.

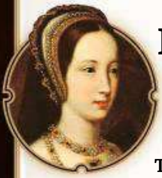
On the advice of the Spanish ambassador, Mary finally agreed to do so. She never forgave herself for what she perceived to be the betrayal of her mother, but her circumstances immediately improved. She was welcomed back to court and into her father's favour, and she soon became close to her stepmother. Furthermore, she was chosen as godmother to the longed-for son, Edward, that Queen Jane gave birth to in October 1537. Her restoration to favour, however, was only successful in personal terms, and Mary remained legally disinherited by her father. There is no doubt that Mary's tumultuous childhood had caused deep and permanent scars - her father would later acquire a reputation as a tyrant, and it is fair to say that Mary was one of his victims.



Mary uses her 'royal touch' to cure a subject's scrofula. English monarchs were thought to possess healing powers

THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT MARY

Get to know the other Marys in the House of Tudor

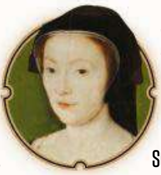


MARY TUDOR

1496-1533

STATUS: HENRY VIII'S SISTER

The first Mary Tudor was Henry VIII's younger sister, of whom he was extremely fond. It is often claimed that Henry's famous ship, Mary Rose, was named in her honour, but there is no evidence for this. Mary was the namesake of Mary I.

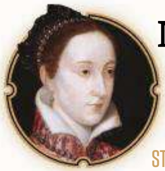


MARY OF GUISE

1515-60

STATUS: CONSORT OF JAMES V OF SCOTLAND AND REGENT

The French-born second wife of James V of Scotland was mother to Mary, Queen of Scots. Following the death of her husband six days after her daughter's birth, Mary acted as regent of Scotland on her daughter's behalf.

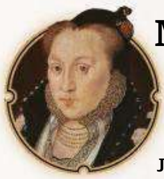


MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS

1542-87

STATUS: QUEEN OF SCOTS AND MARY'S SECOND COUSIN

Mary, Queen of Scots, is arguably one of the worst monarchs ever to have ruled. She was the granddaughter of Henry VIII's elder sister, Margaret Tudor, and her husband James IV of Scotland.



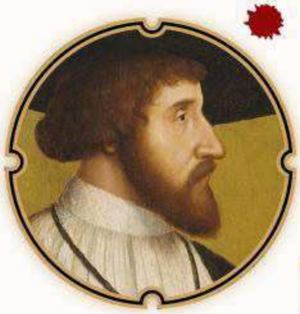
MARY GREY

C.1545-78

STATUS: THE QUEEN'S SECOND COUSIN

Mary Grey was the youngest sister of the executed Lady Jane Grey, and may have been named in honour of her second cousin. Mary I treated her and her elder sister, Katherine, with kindness, but both sisters would later experience Queen Elizabeth I's wrath when they each married without royal consent.

MONARCHS WITH A TASTE FOR MURDER



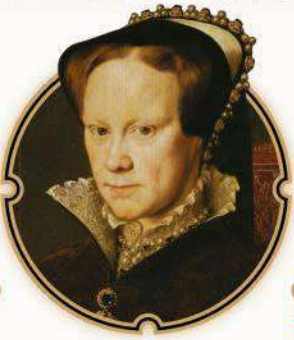
CHRISTIAN II OF DENMARK

REIGN: 1513-23

When Christian invaded Sweden in 1520, the king broke his promise of a general amnesty by ordering the execution of between 80-90 members of the Swedish nobility. This atrocity became known as the Stockholm Bloodbath, and Christian was later deposed.

ESTIMATED KILL

80-90



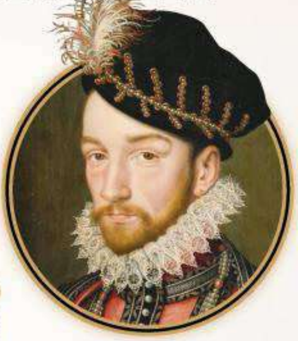
MARY I

REIGN: 1553-58

Mary's estimated kill count includes not only the 284 Protestants that were burned at the stake but also Lady Jane Grey and her supporters, as well as many of those who had joined the Wyatt Rebellion. Despite her nickname of Bloody Mary, she was by no means as ruthless as many of her fellow monarchs.

ESTIMATED KILL

300-380



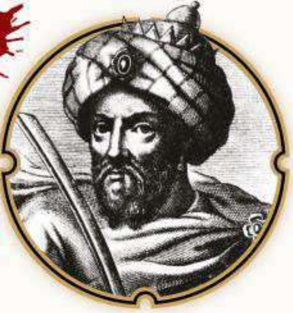
CHARLES IX OF FRANCE

REIGN: 1560-74

It was during Charles's reign that the mass murder of French Huguenots known as the Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre was committed. Although estimates of the number killed vary and Charles was not responsible for all of these, he did order the murder of the leaders, which began the massacre.

ESTIMATED KILL

2,000-30,000



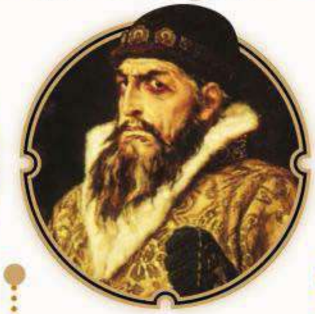
ISMAIL 'THE BLOODTHIRSTY' OF MOROCCO

REIGN: 1672-1727

Also known as the Warrior King, Ismail acquired a reputation for the torture and execution of his enemies. He also had the severed heads of up to 10,000 of his enemies displayed on the city gates of Fez as a gruesome warning to his people.

ESTIMATED KILL

30,000



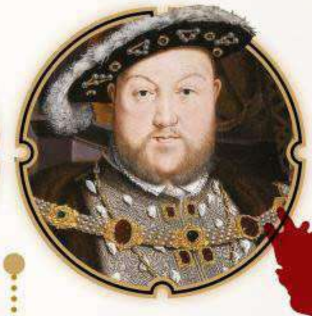
IVAN THE TERRIBLE

REIGN: 1547-84

Ivan only admitted to killing 3,750 people during his reign, but the reality was far worse. He ruled Russia with ruthlessness, and even killed his own son. As a child he tortured animals, and in adulthood raped and mass murdered a number of his subjects.

ESTIMATED KILL

60,000



HENRY VIII

REIGN: 1509-47

The number of people killed during the reign of Mary's father has almost certainly been grossly exaggerated, but it is true that the king ordered the executions of a number of people close to him, including two of his wives.

ESTIMATED KILL

57,000-72,000

MATCH-MAKING AND MATRIMONY

How Philip and Mary made it to the altar

Mary's mother, Katherine of Aragon, had always hoped that her daughter would make a Spanish match. It was a wish that Mary also cherished, but she had never met her future bridegroom, Philip, and in a similar manner to other foreign royal marriages, there was a protocol to be adhered to.

EXCHANGE PORTRAITS

In the case of foreign marriages when it was not always possible to see your future spouse in person, it was common for portraits to be sent to your intended. In some instances this did not work out well, the most famous example being that of Mary's father and Anne of Cleves - he fell in love with her portrait but was repulsed by her in person. Mary had no such worries, and was besotted with Philip's portrait by Titian.

CONCLUDE NEGOTIATIONS

In January 1554, representatives of Philip's father, the Emperor Charles V, arrived in London in order to finalise the negotiations for Philip and Mary's marriage. At this time it was agreed that Philip would not be given any authority above the queen, and would merely assist her in her duties as her consort.

WRITE LETTERS AND SEND GIFTS

Once the negotiations had been concluded, it was common to write letters and send lavish gifts to your intended. Philip and Mary exchanged gifts of diamonds, and Philip also presented Mary with the world-famous La Peregrina pearl.

THE WEDDING

On 25 July 1554, Philip and Mary were married in a splendid ceremony at Winchester Cathedral. It was conducted in Latin, and after the wedding the couple spent ten days honeymooning in the city, residing at Wolvesey Palace.

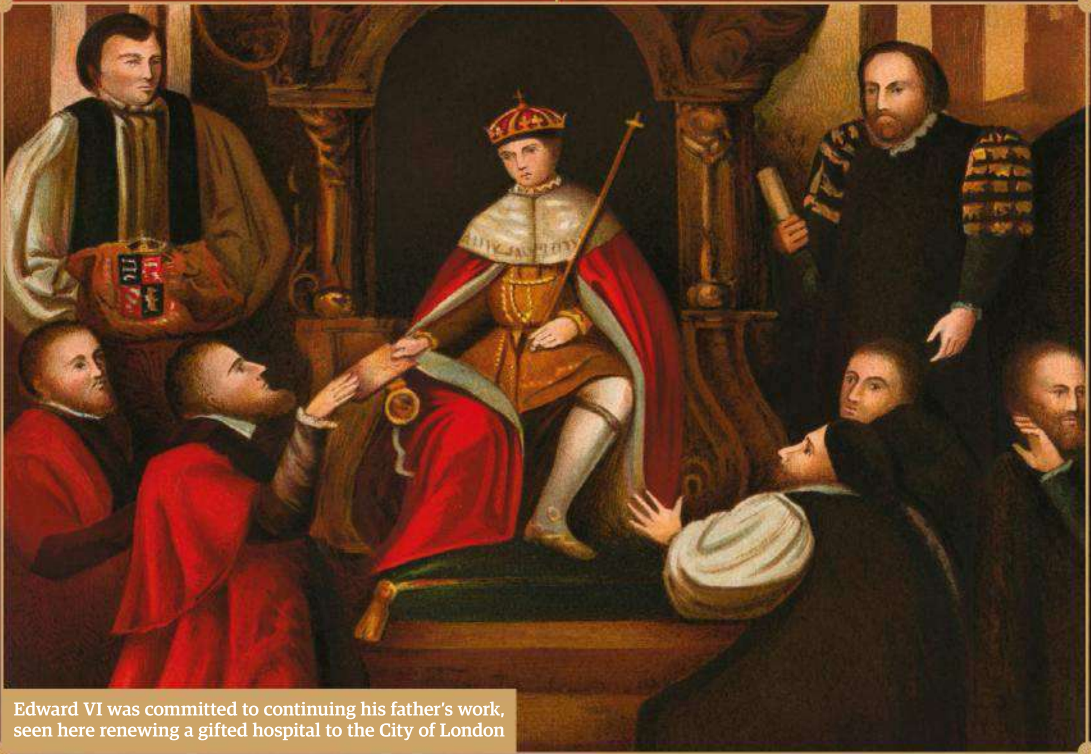
Fighting for her rights

Henry VIII died on 28 January 1547 and was succeeded by his nine-year-old son, Edward VI. Despite his earlier treatment of his daughter, in the latter years of Henry's reign, life had become more settled for Mary. She had a privileged lifestyle, and her accounts reveal that she appreciated fine food, was fond of clothes and jewels, and loved music. She also liked to ride and hunt, and gambled at cards. She had enjoyed good relationships with most of her stepmothers, particularly her father's last wife, Katherine Parr. Furthermore, though both she and Elizabeth remained legally illegitimate, her father had restored them both to their place in the succession should their half-brother, Edward, die childless. Despite the fact they had both been raised as Protestants, she was fond of her younger siblings, and often lavished them with gifts.

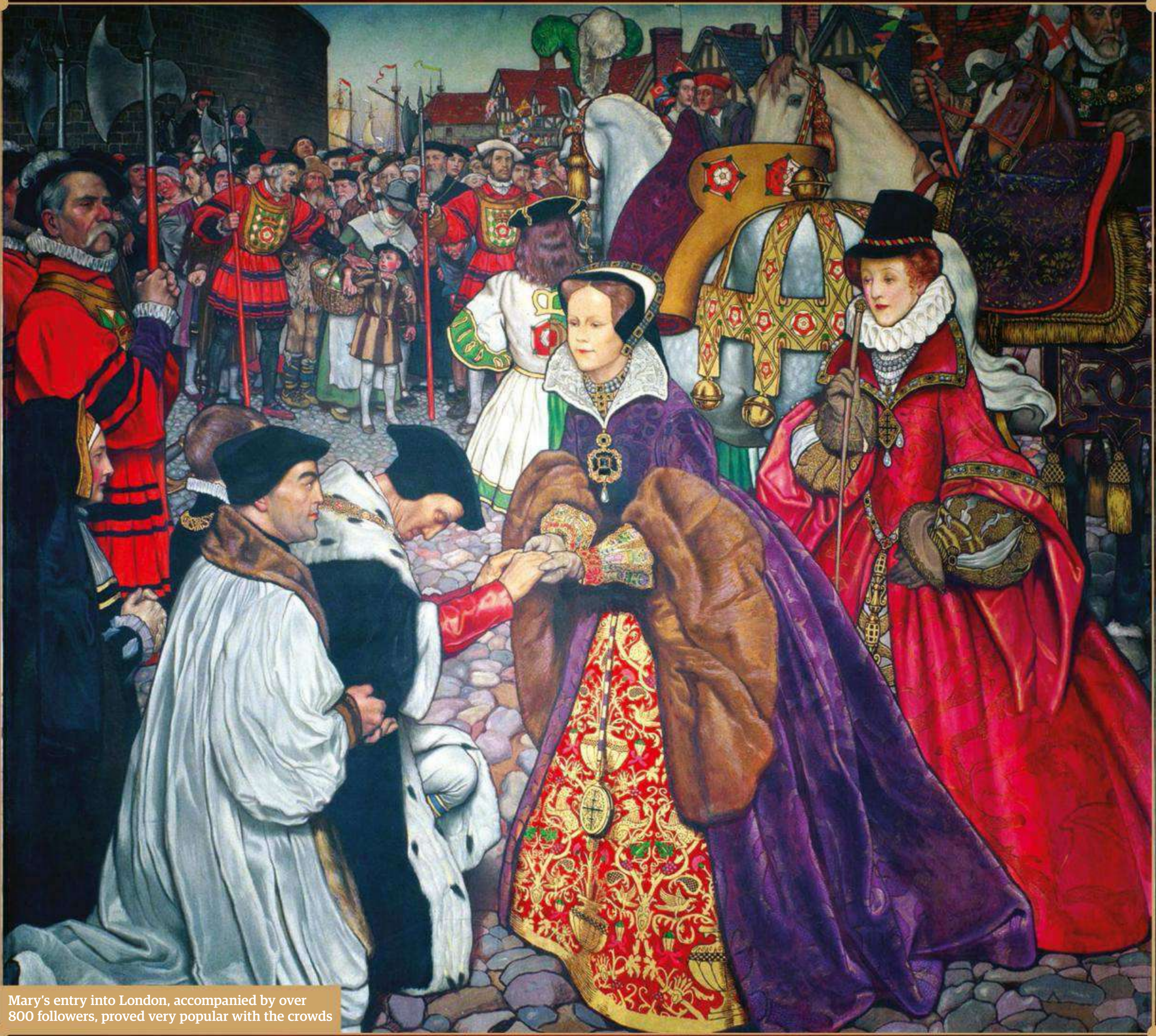
But life would become increasingly difficult for Mary under Edward's rule. He was as fervently Protestant as Mary was Catholic, and was determined to ensure that his realm became a wholly Protestant nation. Mary had compromised her faith once during the reign of her father, and was determined not to do so again. She steadfastly refused to conform to any other religion than Catholicism, but her defiance caused a permanent rift in her relationship with her half-brother. When the 15-year-old Edward died childless in July 1553, it was discovered that rather than honouring the terms set out in his father's will, he had named his Protestant cousin, Lady Jane Grey, as his heir to the throne. Once again an attempt had been made to deprive Mary of her rights.

> "Mary had compromised her faith once during the reign of her father, and was determined not to do so again"

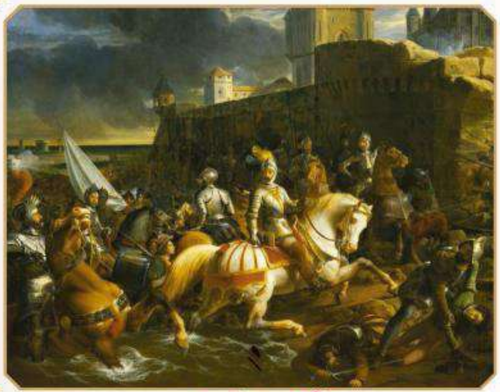
On 10 July, Lady Jane Grey was publicly proclaimed queen. Mary, meanwhile, had learned of her half-brother's death and the attempts to oust her from her place in the succession, but rather than bowing down, she was determined to fight. She fled into East Anglia where she was a major landowner, and incredibly popular; this proved to be a wise move. Making her way to her stronghold of Framlingham Castle, Mary was able to rally her supporters, who flocked to her banner in the coming days. Though Lady Jane Grey's father-in-law, the Duke of Northumberland, set out to apprehend her, his mission proved to be fruitless. Rather than gaining support as he had hoped, Northumberland's forces began to desert him in favour of Mary. As soon as he left London, sensing the mood of the people and hearing of the increased support for Mary, the Privy Council finally decided to abandon Jane.



Edward VI was committed to continuing his father's work, seen here renewing a gifted hospital to the City of London



Mary's entry into London, accompanied by over 800 followers, proved very popular with the crowds



THE LOSS OF CALAIS

The recapture of England's last continental possession stung

With her husband Philip's encouragement, Mary finally agreed to lend English support to Spain's war against France in March 1556. It was an unpopular move, and stretched the country's already limited resources to the limit. Under the leadership of the Earl of Pembroke, the English Army fought well and achieved a decisive victory against the French at Saint Quentin in 1557. However, the same could not be said of the English garrison stationed at Calais, and on New Year's Day 1558, 27,000 French troops attacked the town. On 7 January, it surrendered and was declared a reclaimed land.

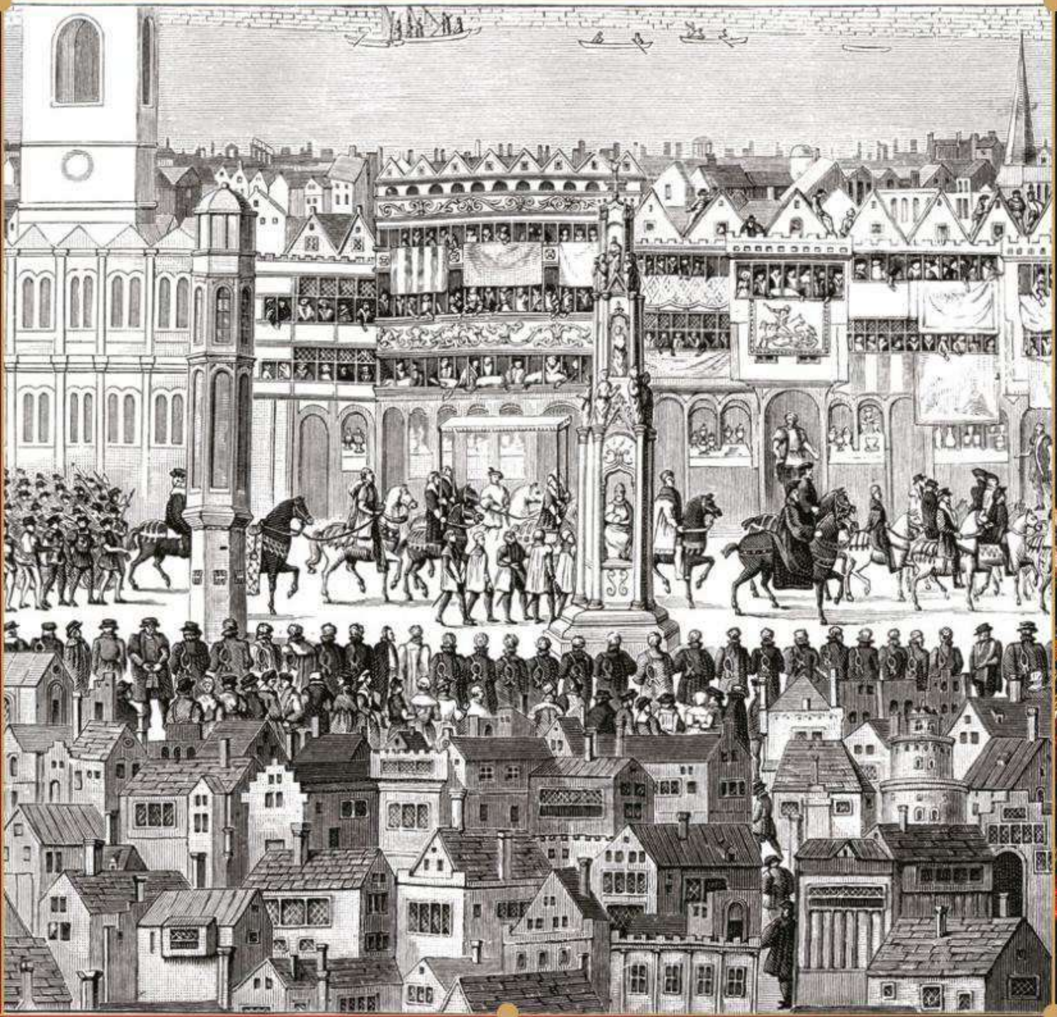
Calais was the last English possession in France, and had been in its hands since 1347 when Edward III captured the town. The loss was both disastrous and humiliating for England, and the diarist Henry Machyn recorded that it was, "… the heaviest tidings to London and to England that ever was heard of." Moreover, plans to try to regain possession came to nothing. For centuries, blame for the loss of Calais has been aimed squarely at Mary. This is too simplistic a view, however, and at the time it was not seen in this way. It is therefore unfair to attribute it wholly to Mary's actions.

By 19 July, Mary had won the day without a drop of bloodshed: Lady Jane was deposed, and Mary was proclaimed queen to the great joy of her subjects. Jane was imprisoned in the Tower of London, and, on 3 August, Mary entered London in triumph: the dark days of uncertainty and turmoil she had experienced throughout her life now appeared to be at an end, and she had at last come into her rightful inheritance.

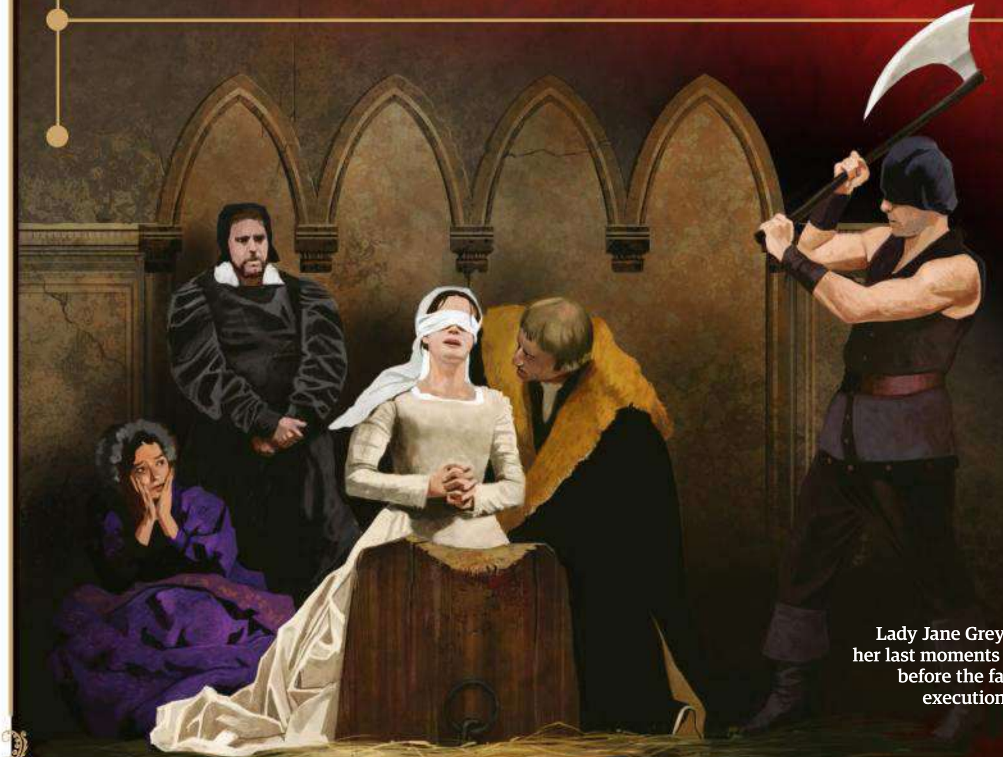
Queen Mary

On 1 October, Mary's achievements seemed to be complete when she succeeded in becoming the first queen regnant of England to be crowned. A queen regnant reigning supreme in England was unprecedented, and thus Mary had no example from which to follow. This certainly later worked in her half-sister Elizabeth's favour, as she was able to learn from Mary's mistakes. Mary, however, had good reason to believe that a woman could rule successfully. Her maternal grandmother, Isabella of Castile, had been an effective monarch in her own right, and Mary's mother had always believed that her daughter could do the same.

Four days after the coronation, Mary's parliament met and passed the First Statute of Repeal. This erased all of the religious policies that had been put in place by Edward VI, for Mary was determined that England ought to be returned to the Catholic Church under the jurisdiction of the pope. At the same time, she was given the opportunity to correct a wrong that had remained with her for many years: the marriage of her parents, which had been denounced by Thomas Cranmer, was declared to be valid, finally securing her own legitimacy.



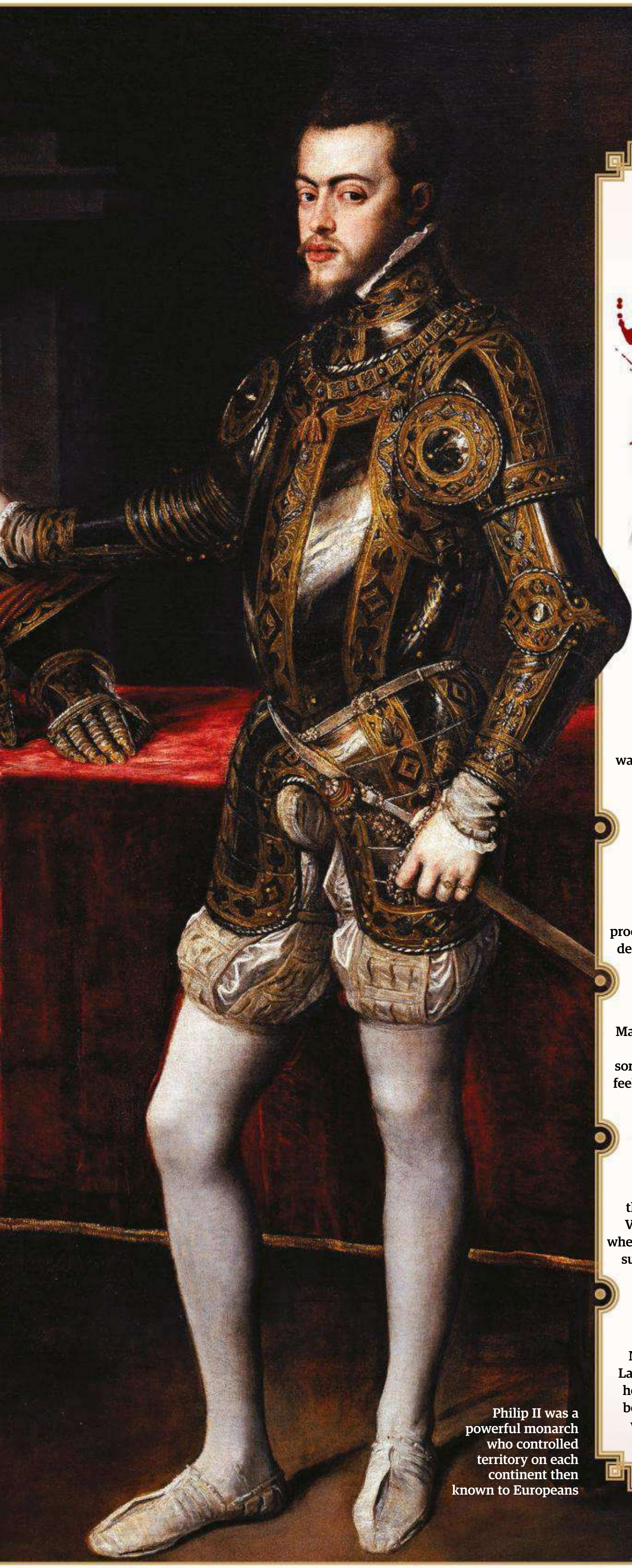
"Under enormous pressure from her advisers she had no choice but to order Jane's execution"



Lady Jane Grey spends her last moments praying before the fall of the executioner's axe

In a further step to secure her position, in April 1554, parliament passed the Act for Regal Power. This consolidated the queen's power "as fully and absolutely" as it had been in any of Mary's male predecessors: despite her sex, her authority was to be on a level with theirs.

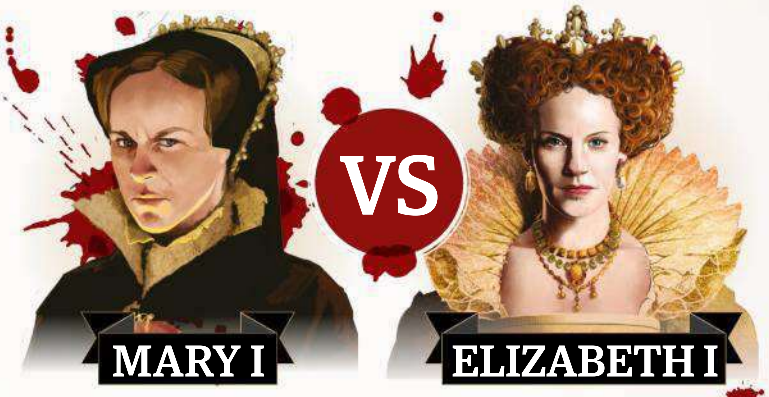
Though Mary was queen in her own right, it never occurred to her that she would rule alone. From her infancy she had been primed for marriage, and it had always been anticipated that she would marry abroad. She had been briefly betrothed to her cousin, the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, when she was only six years old, but the negotiations had come to nothing. Almost immediately after her accession therefore, thoughts of matrimony began to occupy not only Mary's mind, but those of her councillors, too. Though various candidates were suggested, the most popular being Mary's English cousin, Edward Courtenay, in Mary's mind the decision had already been made. She declared her intention to wed her second cousin, Philip of Spain. He was the son of the emperor, and was 11 years Mary's junior. He was an attractive prospect to Mary



Philip II was a powerful monarch who controlled territory on each continent then known to Europeans

SISTER ACT

Mary I and Elizabeth I: just how similar were the two Tudor queens?



LENGTH OF REIGN

5 YEARS

45 YEARS

INTELLIGENCE

Both Mary and her half-sister were given an excellent education. Though her abilities as a scholar were never exclaimed as highly as Elizabeth's, Mary was an intelligent woman. A contemporary observed that, "…she is skilled in five languages," speaking four fluently.

Elizabeth was highly praised for her intellect, and her tutors were unanimously impressed with her. She took great pleasure in showcasing her skills by translating work into various languages and presenting it as gifts, notably to her father and Katherine Parr.

POPULARITY

LOVED IN HER LIFETIME

At the time of Mary's accession, she was so popular that many remarked on the commotion in London when her proclamation was read out. However, by her death, her popularity had long since faded.

STILL LOVED TODAY

Although Mary had initially been popular, this was nothing in comparison to Elizabeth. In addition, Elizabeth had the common touch that her sister lacked, and was able to retain the love of her people.

LOVE

UNHAPPILY MARRIED

Mary was deeply in love with her husband, Philip of Spain, and always felt great sorrow when he left England. Although her feelings were not reciprocated, Philip did at least treat his wife with courtesy.

THE VIRGIN QUEEN

Elizabeth never married, and the closest she came to love was with her friend Robert Dudley. Rumours circulated, however, it seems likely that, by her death, Elizabeth was still the 'Virgin Queen'.

MILITARY ACHIEVEMENTS

LOST CALAIS

Mary succeeded in asserting her right to the throne following the death of Edward VI, raising a large army of supporters. But when England declared war on France, early success was followed by the loss of Calais.

DEFEATED THE SPANISH ARMADA

The most famous victory of Elizabeth's reign was the defeat of the Spanish Armada, sent by Mary's former husband, Philip, in 1588. After this she was hailed as the saviour of the English people.

KILLINGS

300-380

Not only did Mary order the execution of Lady Jane Grey and many of those close to her, she also sentenced 284 Protestants to be burned at the stake, including the man who had annulled her parents' marriage, Thomas Cranmer.

200+

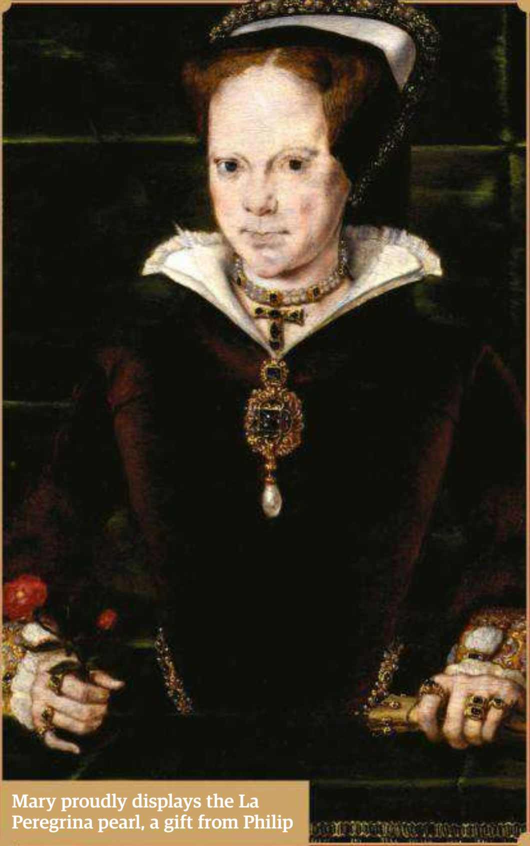
Although Elizabeth did not burn Catholics in the way Mary had Protestants, she did order the disembowelment of more than 200. She also famously ordered the execution of another anointed queen, Mary, Queen of Scots, in 1587.

because of his Spanish heritage and his familial links with her mother, but she was naïve if she thought that her decision would be accepted without protest: her personal wishes overruled her political judgement.

Rebellion, death and imprisonment

The idea of a Spanish marriage was unpopular in England, but the queen was blind to the concerns of her subjects. Not only was Philip a Catholic, he was also a foreigner; the English were suspicious of foreigners, and it was greatly feared that Philip would try to embroil England in Spain's wars. Unknown to Mary, there were those in the country who were determined to protest against the marriage, and a plot was afoot that would test the loyalty of her subjects, and threatened to undo everything she had fought for.

Under the leadership of Sir Thomas Wyatt, a Kentish gentleman, a rebellion was planned that sought not only to prevent Mary's marriage to Philip but also to deprive Mary of her throne. Instead, she would be replaced with her Protestant half-sister, Elizabeth, who almost certainly had some prior knowledge of the plot. More crucially, one of the key conspirators was Henry Grey, duke of Suffolk, the father of Lady Jane Grey who had been incarcerated in the Tower since Mary's accession. Upon learning of the rebellion, Mary took matters into her own hands. Standing in front of her subjects at London's Guildhall, she beseeched her subjects to stand firm against the traitor Wyatt and his followers, and to remain true to their anointed sovereign. Her powerful words had the desired effect, and Mary's people remained loyal to their queen. The rebellion was a washout, and Wyatt and his followers were captured. Mary had been victorious once again.

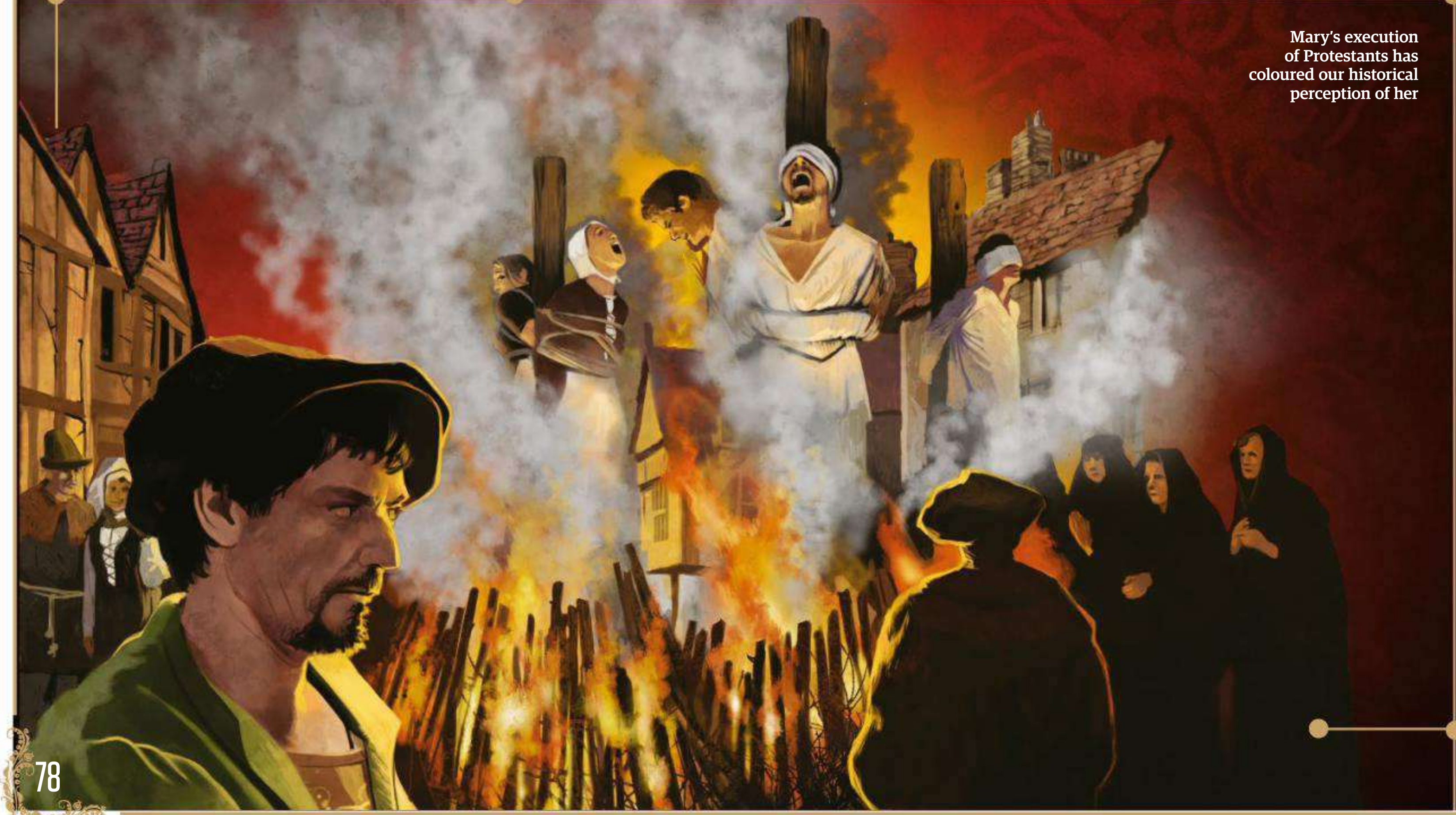


Mary proudly displays the La Peregrina pearl, a gift from Philip

The failure of the Wyatt Rebellion had disastrous consequences for Lady Jane Grey, and her father's involvement sealed her fate. Mary's hand was now forced, and under enormous pressure from her advisers she had no choice but to order Jane's execution. Mary agonised over the decision, and tried to find a way around it, but there was none. On 12 February 1554, 17-year-old Jane was executed.

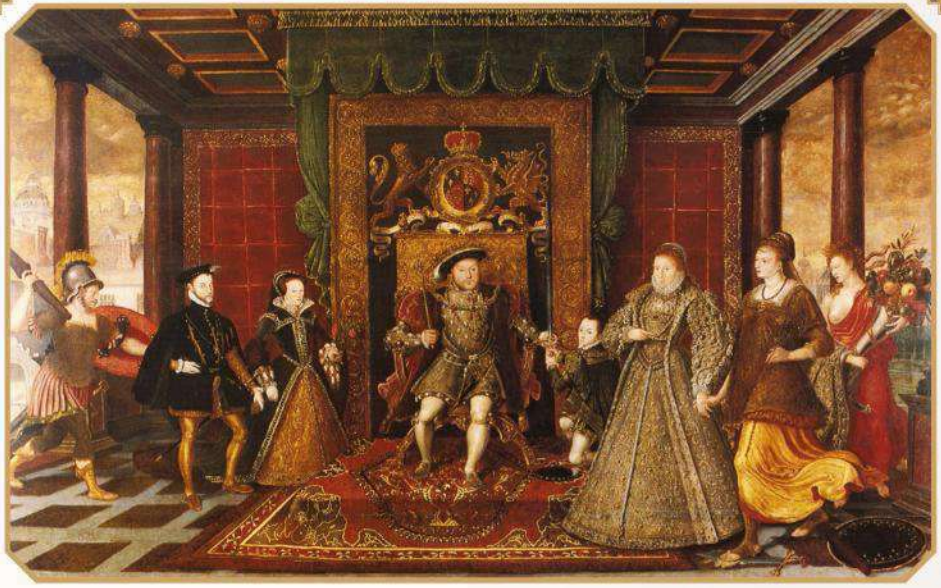
It was not just Jane who was to suffer as a result of Wyatt's treason. Before long, Mary's officers had arrived at Elizabeth's door in order to summon her to London for questioning over her role in the rebellion. Pleading ill health, upon her arrival in the capital Elizabeth had the curtains of her litter drawn back so that the citizens could witness the pitiful state she was in. Dressed in white, she made a startling impression against the blood-

> "The former archbishop of Canterbury recanted his beliefs six times. In spite of this, Mary insisted that he must burn"



Mary's execution of Protestants has coloured our historical perception of her red livery of her guards. It was a clever ploy, one designed to move the citizens to sympathy on Elizabeth's behalf, and it worked. It was precisely the type of display that Queen Mary had hoped to avoid. Taken to the Palace of Whitehall for questioning, evidence against Elizabeth was not forthcoming. Convinced of her complicity in the rebellion, however, Mary was hopeful that a spell in the Tower of London would break her resolve of innocence. Though Elizabeth protested that she was Mary's "most faithful subject", Mary was unmoved, and in March her half-sister was imprisoned. She remained there until May, when a lack of evidence forced Mary to release her. This was not the end of the matter, however, and Elizabeth was sent to Woodstock under house arrest, where she remained for nearly a year. Mary never trusted Elizabeth again, and was always suspicious of her.

The Wyatt Rebellion did not prevent plans for Mary's marriage, however, and in July 1554, Philip landed in England. That same month, the two were married in a magnificent ceremony at Winchester Cathedral. For Mary, the marriage was the fulfilment of all of her hopes and she was in love. However, her feelings were unrequited and though Philip treated Mary with courtesy, the marriage was based on politics. Nevertheless, by the autumn Mary believed that she was pregnant, and proudly announced her happy news. Despite showing many signs of pregnancy, by June 1555 it became clear that there was no baby, and Mary was forced to admit so too. It was the first of two phantom pregnancies she would suffer, dashing all of her hopes for a Catholic heir to succeed her. To make matters worse, Philip, the husband she loved so dearly, abandoned her on both occasions, leaving England for the last time in 1557. Mary was now alone.



1553: THE YEAR OF THREE SOVEREIGNS

Henry VIII's heirs and the struggle for the throne

Early in 1553, Edward VI lay dying. The 15-year-old king was unmarried and had no children, thus thoughts turned to the succession. By the terms of the late King Henry VIII's will, passed in parliament, should Edward die childless then the throne should pass first to the king's eldest daughter, Mary, and her heirs, followed by his youngest daughter, Elizabeth, and her heirs. Both daughters had, however, been previously declared illegitimate and never formally legitimated. Moreover, Edward was determined to ensure a Protestant succession, which would be impossible should Mary succeed.

Realising he could not exclude one half-sister without also excluding the other, Edward cut both Mary and Elizabeth out of the succession by means of an extraordinary document: *My Devise For The Succession*. In this, Edward named his second cousin, the Protestant Lady Jane Grey, as his heir. Jane had already been named as the next heir by Henry VIII should his children die childless, but at the stroke of a pen she superseded both of the king's daughters. There was no time for Edward to pass his *Devise* through parliament, so when he died on 6 July 1553, the *Devise* was illegal.

Protestant burnings

Shortly after Mary's succession, she began to take steps to restore the old religion to her land, and it was not long before it became clear that those who adhered to Protestantism were not safe. Many fled abroad to avoid persecution, but for some this was simply not an option, and many were forced to pay the ultimate price for their beliefs.

In February 1555, the first burnings of Mary's reign began: a total of 284 Protestants were burned, 56 of whom were women. During the reign of Elizabeth, the historian William Camden would write that Mary's, "…days have been ill spoken of, by reason of the barbarous cruelty of the Bishops, who with a most sad spectacle, in all places polluted England by burning Protestants alive." It is interesting to note that Camden did not attribute the blame for the atrocities directly to Mary, but rather her advisers.

Much of the tarnish on Mary's reputation, however, has come from the martyrologist John Foxe. His *Acts And Monuments* highlighted the suffering of the victims, and became the most widely read book written in English after the *Bible*: it damned Mary's reputation. Burning was the rarest form of Tudor punishment, and executions like these were designed to shock people into conforming. In some cases it worked: Thomas Cranmer, former archbishop of Canterbury, recanted his beliefs six times. In spite of this, Mary insisted that he must burn. She still bore a deep grudge for the role he had played in the unhappiness of her early life, but his death was one of her greatest mistakes. Had he been spared, his recantation would have served as excellent propaganda for the new regime. But dead, he was a martyr. Cranmer was burned on 21 March 1556 at Oxford.

Death and legacy

In November 1558, Mary lay dying. Her husband was far away, and she was childless and estranged from her half-sister. Though she could not bring herself to say her name, Mary had accepted that 25-year-old Elizabeth would succeed her. On 17 November, Mary died at Saint James's Palace, and Elizabeth's succession was greeted with the wave of popular enthusiasm that had greeted Mary just five years earlier. Though Mary undoubtedly made mistakes, notably the imprisonment of Elizabeth and the burning of Cranmer, she also had strengths. She had survived the many adversities that had been placed in her path since childhood, and had ultimately triumphed over her enemies on many occasions. As queen she had asserted her authority as the first female monarch to reign supreme. With no template to work from, however, it was easy for Elizabeth to capitalise on her mistakes. Furthermore, had it not been for Foxe's *Acts And Monuments*, she would not have earned the nickname Bloody Mary, and she may have been remembered with greater sympathy.

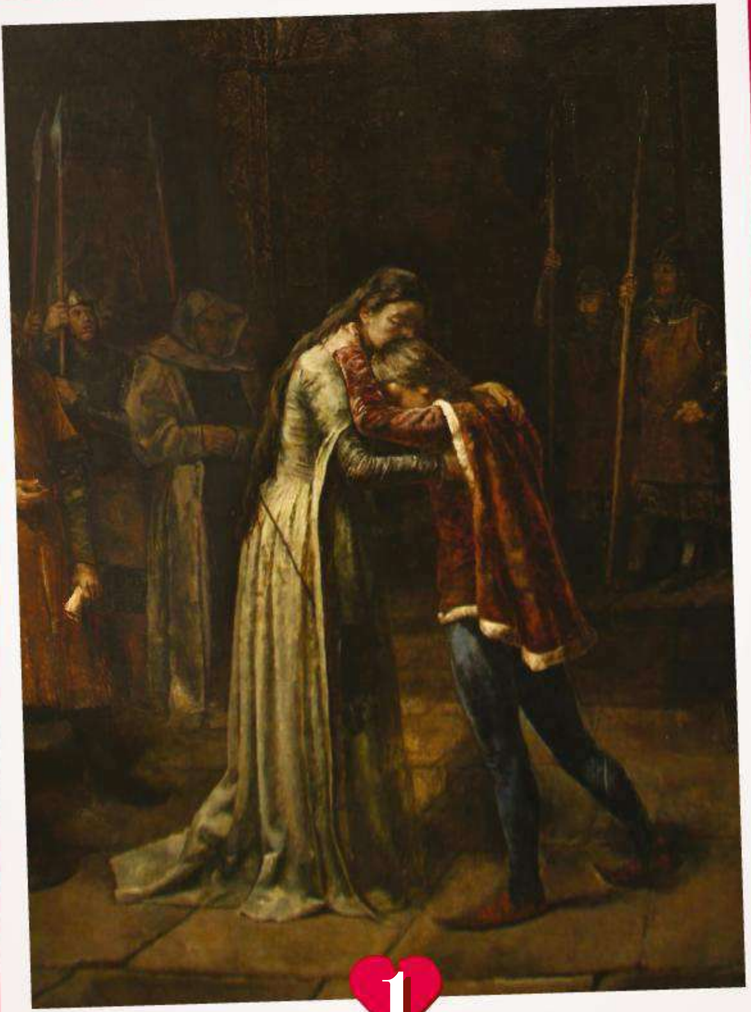
14 Notorious Royal Mistresses

The beauties, harlots and seductresses who vied for power from the royal bedchamber

When a king succeeded to his title, he not only inherited the throne, but all of the trappings of royalty that came with it: palaces, money and servants to name but a few. It also became almost traditional for a king to have something else: a mistress. In many instances the king would take more than one, and the women selected to join the king in his bedchamber would be chosen for a variety of reasons, and because they fulfilled certain criteria desirable to the king. Satisfying a king's sexual desires was only part of the equation and, in addition, mistresses were often expected to entertain their lovers and provide good company.

Mistresses were frequently a cause of fascination to a king's court and subjects, and often triggered as much interest as the king themselves. While some shied away from this attention and did not seek any form of preferment, the majority actively encouraged this and flaunted themselves publicly. Moreover, mistresses often took full advantage of their position in order to promote their own interests, and those of their family and friends. If they were pleasing to the king, the rewards could be great – and life-changing.

Many mistresses came to exert an alarming amount of influence over their royal lovers, and sought not only their own advancement but also sometimes dabbled in politics. Unsurprisingly, this often led to resentment and jealousy both at court and between mistresses, and many were unpopular. In order to counteract a mistress's hold over a king, alternative candidates for his affection might be pushed forward in the hope of catching his eye. Whether loved or loathed, throughout history mistresses have proven to be just as great a talking point as kings and queens. Here are the stories of some of the most memorable.



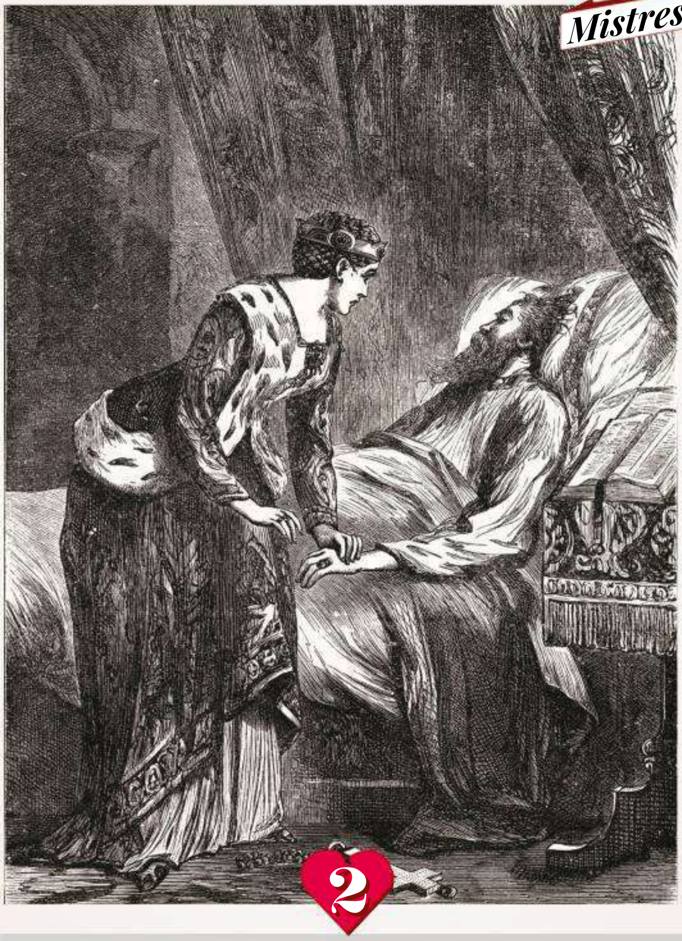
1

Eleanor de Guzman

Royal lover: Alfonso XI of Castile
Years as mistress : 1328-50

In around 1328, Alfonso met the beautiful Eleanor in Seville, and despite being recently married to Maria of Portugal, swiftly made Eleanor his mistress. In a further humiliating snub to Maria, in 1334 he abandoned her to live openly with Eleanor instead. Her royal lover's favour died with him in 1350, however, and intent upon revenge, Queen Maria ordered Eleanor's imprisonment and execution in 1351. However, Eleanor and Alfonso's son, Henry, eventually toppled Maria's son, Peter, and succeeded in becoming king of Castile.

The king took a beau from Seville
But things took a turn for the ill
When the queen came to rule
She was vicious and cruel
But was chucked from the throne of Castile



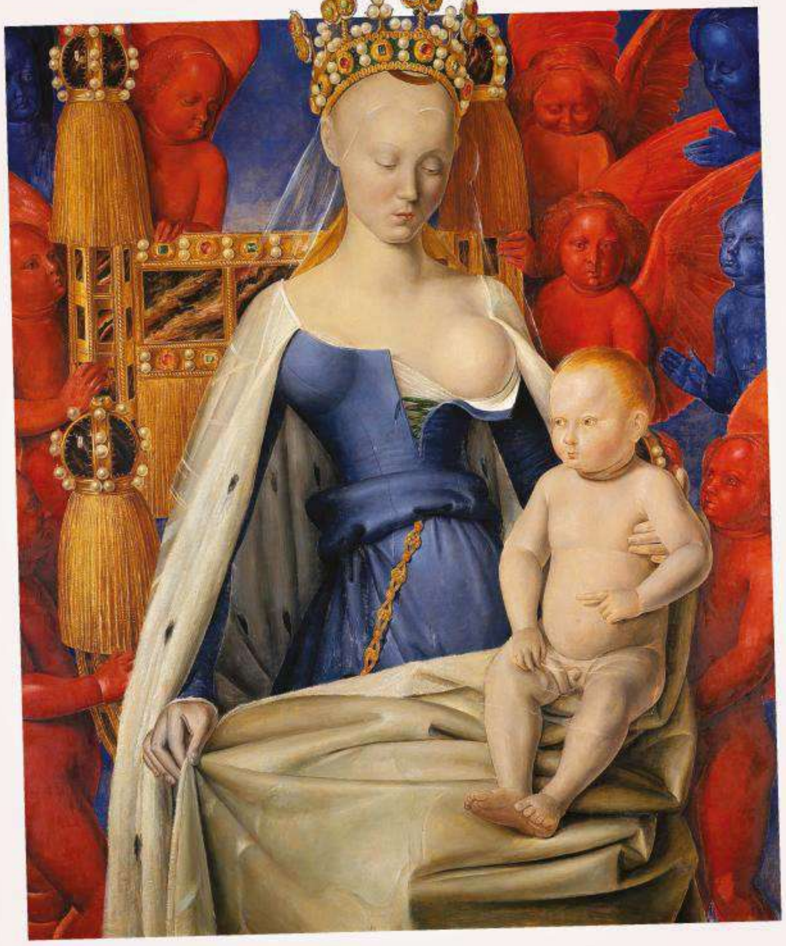
2

Alice Perrers

Royal lover: Edward III of England
Years as mistress: c.1364-77

Serving in the household of Edward III's wife, Queen Philippa, Alice caught the king's eye. Their relationship was not made public, however, until after Philippa's death in 1369. Alice was a grasping mistress who took full advantage of her position, accepting numerous costly gifts both from the king and those who wished to curry his favour. Unsurprisingly she was unpopular, and allegedly stole the rings from her lover's fingers as he lay dying. Following Edward's death, Alice was banished from court and never regained her former influence.

There once was a servant who said
"I'd rather serve the king in his bed"
Then when he died
She pulled and she pried
The rings from his fingers instead



3

Agnes Sorel

Royal lover: Charles VII of France
Years as mistress: 1444-50

Regarded as a woman of exceptional beauty, Agnes managed to retain her royal lover's adoration until her death. She was made the first official royal mistress and was granted immense wealth to match her status. Agnes's influence with the king aroused jealousy, although she managed to remain on good terms with his wife, Queen Marie. When Agnes died in 1450, it was widely suspected that she had been poisoned, a theory that has been supported by recent scientific discoveries.

She thought she was in with a chance
When dubbed royal mistress of France
But beauty and wealth
Can't buy you good health
For death is the foe of romance

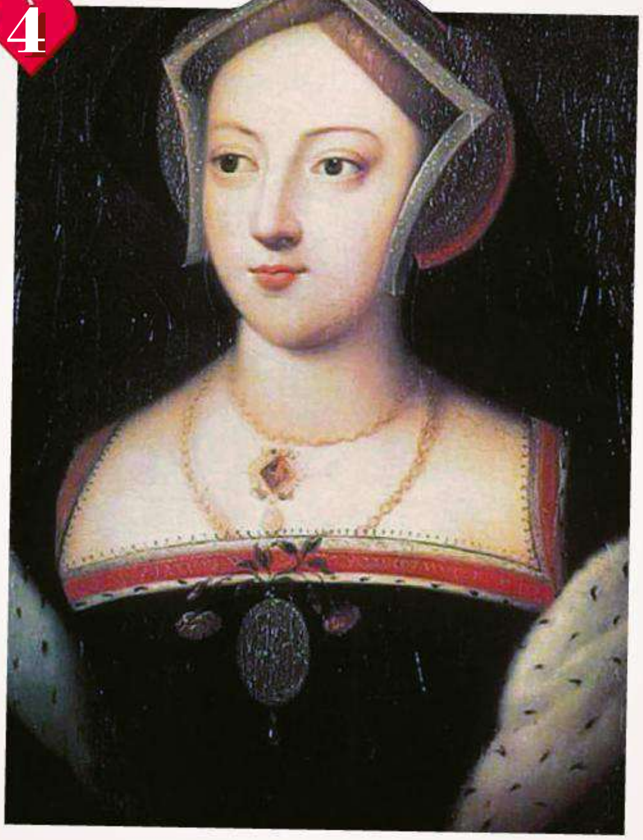
Mary Boleyn

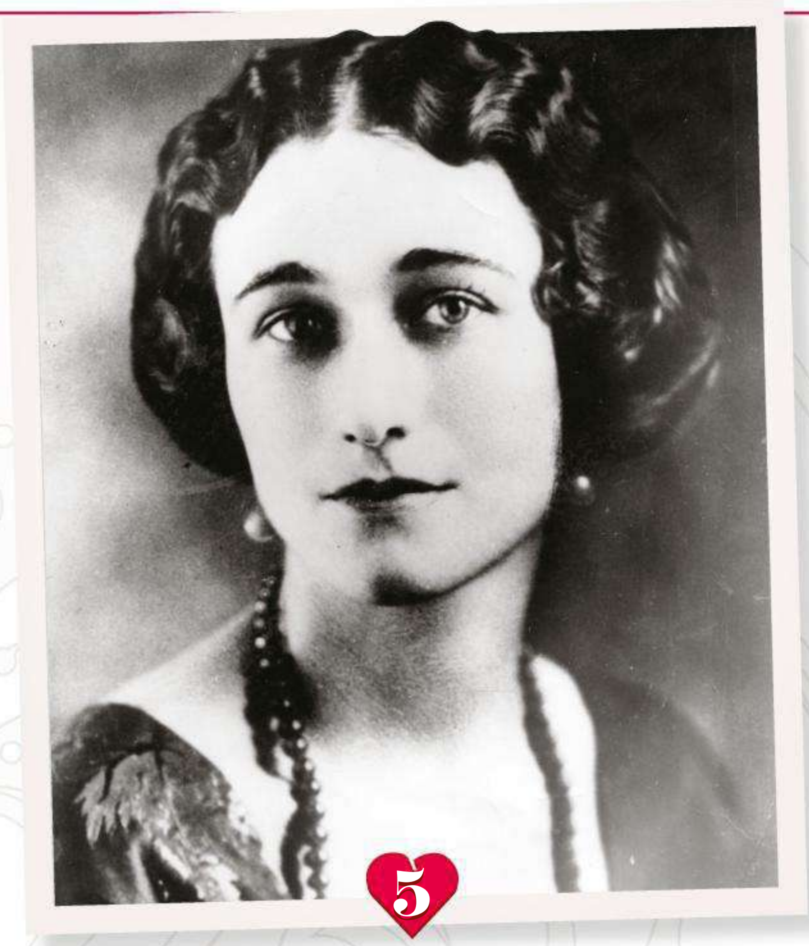
Royal lover: Henry VIII of England
Years as mistress: c.1522-24/25

The most notorious of Henry VIII's mistresses, Mary was also the elder sister of Henry's second wife, Anne Boleyn. Her affair with the king, however, was over long before her sister's marriage. Nevertheless, at the time of their affair Henry was married to Katherine of Aragon, while Mary had been married to William Carey since 1520. Though Mary appears to have received little in terms of material benefits from the relationship, her husband received a number of royal grants suggestive of the monarch's gratitude. The affair was conducted discreetly, and the only public reference the king made was in 1535 when he was accused of having an affair with both Anne Boleyn's mother and sister. "Never with the mother," Henry replied firmly. Despite this, it is likely that Henry fathered Mary's eldest child, a daughter named Catherine. In 1543, Mary died in obscurity.

Mary played a dangerous game
And she nearly got some of the same
As her dear sister Anne
Who fell afoul of the man
That gave the Tudors their fame

4





5

Wallis Simpson

Royal lover: Edward VIII of England Years as mistress: 1934-72

The daughter of an unsuccessful American businessman, Wallis's story was a classic case of rags to riches. On 10 January 1931, in the house of Lady Furness in Melton Mowbray, Wallis met the man who would become her third husband: Edward, prince of Wales. By 1934, Edward had become completely dependent upon Wallis, and despite his position as heir to the throne and the fact that Wallis had been married twice, he was determined to make her his wife. Edward's love for Wallis did not fade when, on 20 January 1936, he ascended the throne as Edward VIII. By this time their affair was public, but there was one major obstacle: Wallis was in the process of divorcing her second husband, Ernest Simpson, and the whole situation was causing a scandal. Realising he was unable to marry her and retain his throne, Edward refused to give Wallis up - even if it meant abdication. Wallis, however, was determined that her lover ought not to abdicate, and tried every method of persuasion to convince him. But his love for Wallis overcame his sense of royal duty and, on 11 December 1936, Edward VIII abdicated in favour of his younger brother, who succeeded as George VI. Edward instead took up the title of Duke of Windsor, and following her divorce, Edward and Wallis were married in Touraine. The Windsors spent the rest of their married life together living abroad, and, despite their marriage, Wallis was not accepted or received by the royal family.

◆

Suffice to say she changed his life
Just by being another chap's wife
They said, "Would you mind,
If you left her behind?"
And jabbed in his back with a knife

Philandering kings and their illicit brood

With every royal affair came the risk of pregnancy. While some monarchs and mistresses openly embraced and flaunted their offspring, others were eager to keep them under wraps. For example, Charles II acknowledged most of his illegitimate children, and made sure that they were well provided for. By contrast, Henry VIII was so discreet about his extra-marital affairs that it is unclear precisely how many illegitimate children he had.

ISMAIL OF MOROCCO

Number of illegitimate children: 888–1,000

1,000

HENRY I OF ENGLAND

Number of illegitimate children: 15 acknowledged, but perhaps as many as 25

CHARLES II OF ENGLAND

Number of illegitimate children: 14 – 16

LOUIS XIV OF FRANCE

Number of illegitimate children: 12

WILLIAM IV OF ENGLAND

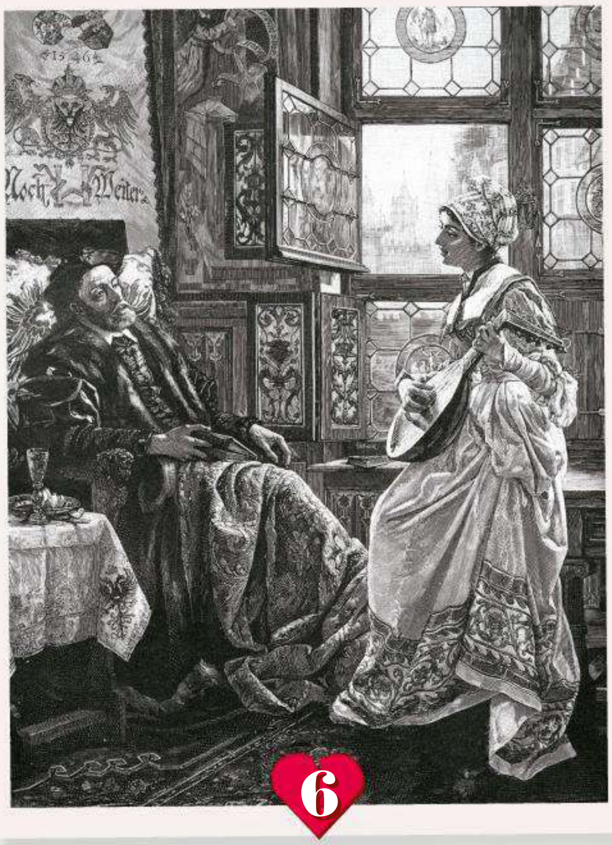
Number of illegitimate children: 10

MAGNUS III OF NORWAY

Number of illegitimate children: 5 acknowledged, but possibly 8

CHARLES V, HOLY ROMAN EMPEROR

Number of illegitimate children: 4 or possibly 5



6

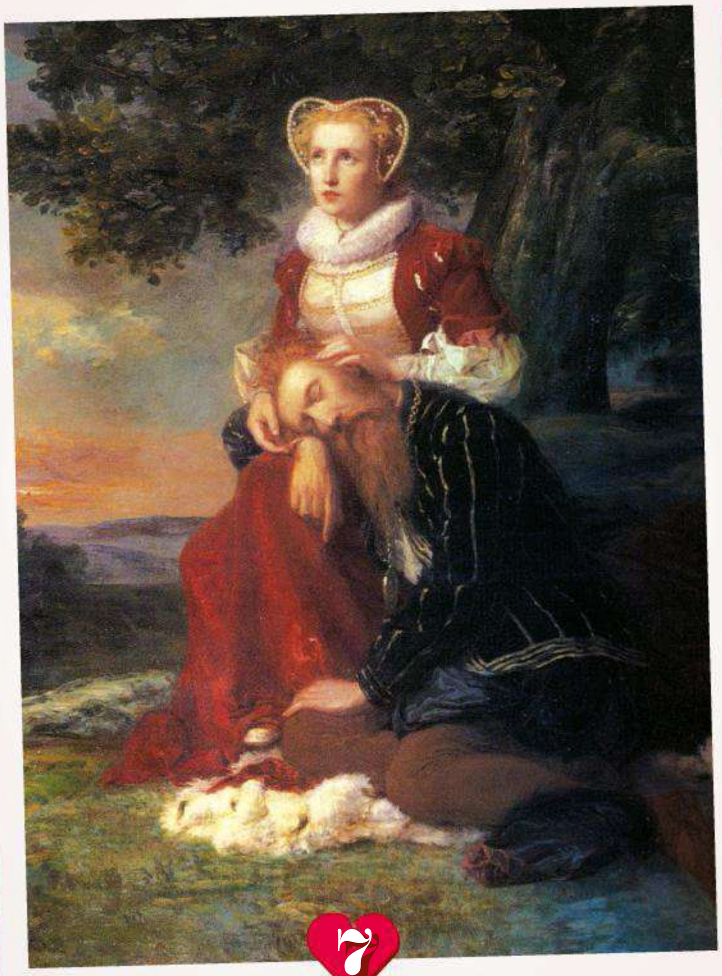
Barbara Blomberg

Royal lover: Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor
Year as mistress: 1546

A singer by occupation and from a good Ratisbon family, Barbara's affair with the Emperor Charles V didn't last long. Her liaison with the most powerful monarch in Europe began when she sang for the emperor. His wife, Isabella of Portugal, was dead, and rather than remarry, Charles had taken solace in the arms of several mistresses. Though Barbara wielded no power over her royal lover and their affair was little more than a brief fling, it did result in Barbara's pregnancy. In February 1547, she gave birth to a son. Named John of Austria, the baby was taken from his mother almost immediately. Instead, his royal father had decided that he ought to be raised in Spain, while Barbara was married off to Hieronymus Kegel. She had three further children with her husband, but only met her son by the emperor once - in 1576. John was her greatest legacy, and went on to excel in the military service of his half-brother, Philip II of Spain, at the Battle of Lepanto in 1571.

◆

Babs bagged a king with a song
But things went suddenly wrong
She gave him a lad
And he was ever so glad
But thought it was time she moved on



7

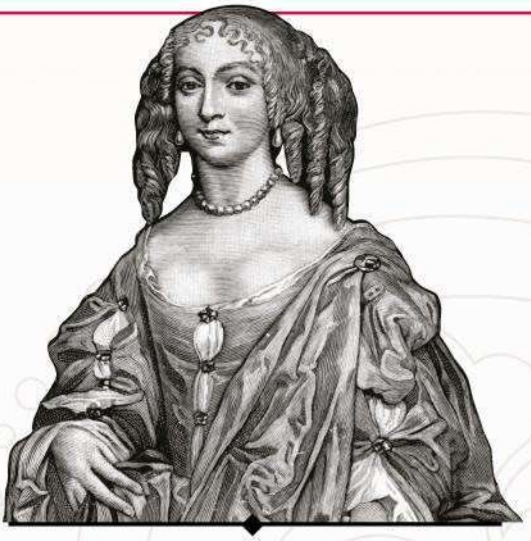
Karin Mansdotter

Royal lover: Eric XIV of Sweden
Years as mistress: 1565-77

Openly paraded at court as the king's mistress, Karin was given all the trappings a royal mistress could expect: costly clothes, a lavish suite of apartments at court and a host of servants. Eric XIV had had various mistresses, but so infatuated was he with Karin that she became his sole official mistress. Moreover, in 1567, Eric went one step further and married his mistress in secret. The following year the couple married again in a public ceremony: Karin was now queen of Sweden. Her husband, however, was mentally unstable, and shortly after their second wedding Eric was overthrown by his own brothers. His family were imprisoned, and though Karin was initially allowed to remain with her husband, the births of two children meant that the couple were eventually separated. Karin was sent to Finland, where she remained under arrest until the death of her husband in 1577. She spent the rest of her life living quietly in a royal estate.

◆

He married her twice so it's true
That he loved her and everyone knew
But alas for the queen
Life wasn't a dream
And she was driven to Finland to stew



Nell once made bread on the stage
But played the star role of her age
Kept by the king
With no title or ring
A pet in a sumptuous cage

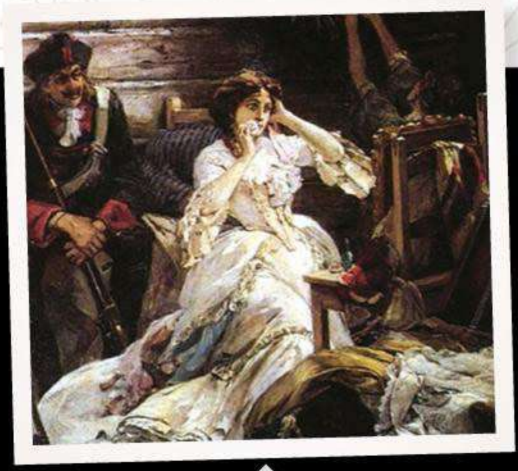
8

Nell Gwynn

Royal lover: **Charles II of England** Years as mistress: **1668-85**

Nell's position as a royal mistress was life-changing. The most famous of Charles II's mistresses was of humble origin, rising from orange seller to actress, and then to royal mistress. Neither was Charles the first of her lovers, as Nell had been previously involved with both Charles Hart and Charles Sackville. Nell was popular, and managed to retain the king's love through her wit and sense of humour; she was referred to as "pretty, witty Nell".

She was utterly faithful to Charles, and in return for her services Nell was rewarded with a town house on Pall Mall, and was comfortably provided for. Unlike several of the king's other mistresses, however, Nell was given no title. Nevertheless, she lived in luxury and had two sons by the king, one of whom became Duke of St Albans. At the time of Charles's death, Bishop Burnet claimed that the king had urged his successor to, "Let not poor Nelly starve."



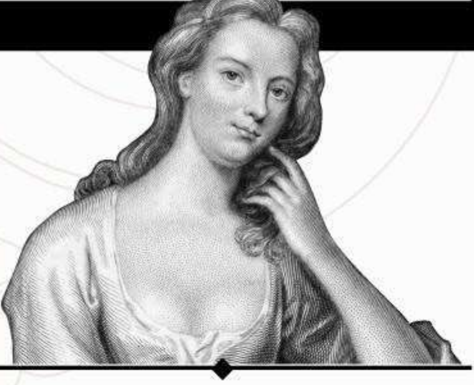
Mary went a bit too far
In knocking boots with a tsar
She lied to him
And for her sin
Her severed head rose like a star

9

Mary Hamilton

Royal Lover: **Peter the Great of Russia**
Years as mistress: **1713-17**

A Scot by birth, Mary emigrated to Russia where she joined the household of the Empress Catherine in 1713. It was here that she caught the eye of Catherine's husband, Peter the Great, but their love affair was destined to end dramatically. Peter was not Mary's only lover, and she was simultaneously conducting an affair with Ivan Mikhailovich Orlov. However, she was devastated when she learned that Ivan was also the lover of another of Peter's mistresses, Avdotya Chernysheva. Desperate to try and win back his affection, Mary presented Ivan with a number of costly gifts that she had stolen from her royal mistress. When Mary's rooms were searched in 1717, several of Catherine's belongings were discovered there, and Mary was arrested. To make matters worse, it came to light that she had not only had an abortion, but that she had also given birth in secret to a baby that she had proceeded to drown. In November 1718, Mary was found guilty of theft, abortion and infanticide, and was sentenced to death by her royal lover. On 14 March 1719, Mary was beheaded by sword. In a last bitter encounter, Peter raised her head to the assembled crowd, kissed it and then threw it to the ground.



Her royal tryst was all so clean
With the blessing of the queen
Without a rival
Her survival
Was guaranteed, her life serene

10

Henrietta Howard

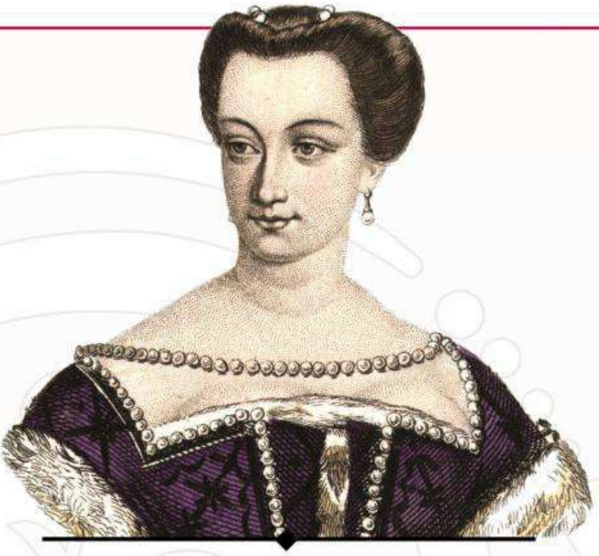
Royal lover: **George II of England** Years as mistress: **1723-34**

Travelling to Hanover, Henrietta planned to ingratiate herself with the future George I. There, she met and became close to his son, the future George II. When he journeyed with his wife, Caroline of Ansbach, to England to take up his place in his father's court, Henrietta obtained a position in Caroline's household as a woman of the bedchamber. Her husband was also given a place at court, and Henrietta quickly became popular as she was attractive and renowned for her wit. Although George was deeply in love with Caroline, he felt duty bound to take a mistress, and selected Henrietta with his wife's full knowledge and approval. Unlike some other royal mistresses, Henrietta was unassuming, and did not crave power and influence. She continued to serve in Caroline's household, and was rewarded with an increase in her wages and protection from her abusive husband. A more tangible reminder of their affair survives in the form of Marble Hill House, the splendid Twickenham home George built for his obliging mistress.

11

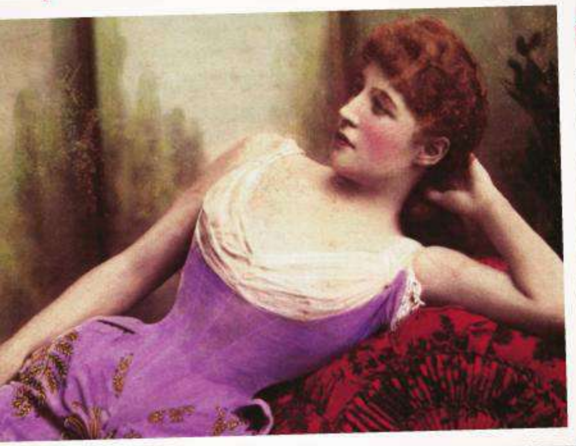
Diane de Poitiers

Royal lover: Henry II of France Years as mistress: 1534-59



Henry and Diane's relationship began in Henry's youth. As he grew, so too did his devotion to the enchantingly beautiful and intelligent Diane, and it was a love that would endure until the end of his life. In 1533, Henry was married to Catherine de Medici, a match for which he had little taste. It was Diane, realising his need to sire male heirs, who encouraged Henry to visit his wife's bedchamber, and though the marriage was unsuccessful in personal terms, it did produce ten children. Diane wielded great influence over her royal lover, and enjoyed the privileges that came with the role of mistress. She was created Duchess d'Etampes and given several important royal manors, but earned the enmity of Queen Catherine. When Henry died in a jousting accident in 1559, the opportunity for revenge presented itself. Diane's power immediately fell away, and she was forced to spend the remainder of her life away from court.

Diane was surprisingly fair
She saw Henry needed an heir
So she sent him to mate
With the wife he did hate
And he sired ten kids in her lair



12

Lillie Langtree

Royal lover: Edward VII of England Years as mistress: 1877-80

A famous beauty and successful actress, it was not long before Lillie caught Edward's eye. He asked to be seated next to her at a dinner party on 24 May 1877 and became infatuated with her. Edward was, at this time, prince of Wales, and a married father to six children. Lillie was also married, her husband being Edward Langtry, and her relationship with the prince was not the first of her extra-marital affairs. Edward was generous to his mistress, spending vast amounts of money on her, and building her a house in Bournemouth. Lillie was even accepted by Edward's wife, Alexandra.

The relationship, however, came to an end when French stage and film actress Sarah Bernhardt superseded Lillie in the prince's affections, but the two remained on good terms. Furthermore, it was not long before Lillie, too, moved on from the affair, and became embroiled with several others. She became pregnant by Prince Louis of Battenberg, and subsequently gave birth to a daughter. By this time she was estranged from her husband, and they eventually divorced. In 1899, she married Hugo Gerald de Bathe, a marriage of convenience. Lillie died in 1929 and was buried in Jersey.

Eddie caused sweet Lillie glee
In their love nest by the sea
But then it ended
So she befriended
The prince of another country

***Risks** and **rewards** of being a royal mistress*

Pros

LAVISH GIFTS

Gifts were a perk that came in a variety of forms and from an assortment of people: not only a mistress's royal lover, but also those who sought to bribe her to use her influence with the monarch for their benefit. Jewels and money were popular choices.

✓

GRAND TITLES

If a mistress was favoured then she might be given a title. Charles II's mistresses, Barbara Villiers and Louise de Kérouaille, were created duchess of Cleveland and duchess of Portsmouth.

✓

NEW PLACE

A new house was the ultimate sign of royal affection. Caroline Lacroix, the mistress of Leopold II of Belgium, was given the Villa Leopolda on the French Riviera by her lover.

✓

Cons

FICKLE FORTUNES

The moment a woman became a mistress she was faced with competition from others, vying for her place. If the king became bored of her, she could be cast away at any time.

✗

VENEREAL DISEASE

Kings often had more than one mistress, and women too could be promiscuous. This naturally meant that there was a risk of venereal disease. Charles II's mistress, Lucy Walter, probably died of this in 1658.

✗

DEATH

Death in childbirth was always a possibility for a mistress who became pregnant by her royal lover. More chillingly, if she displeased or betrayed the king, the consequences could sometimes be fatal.

✗

13

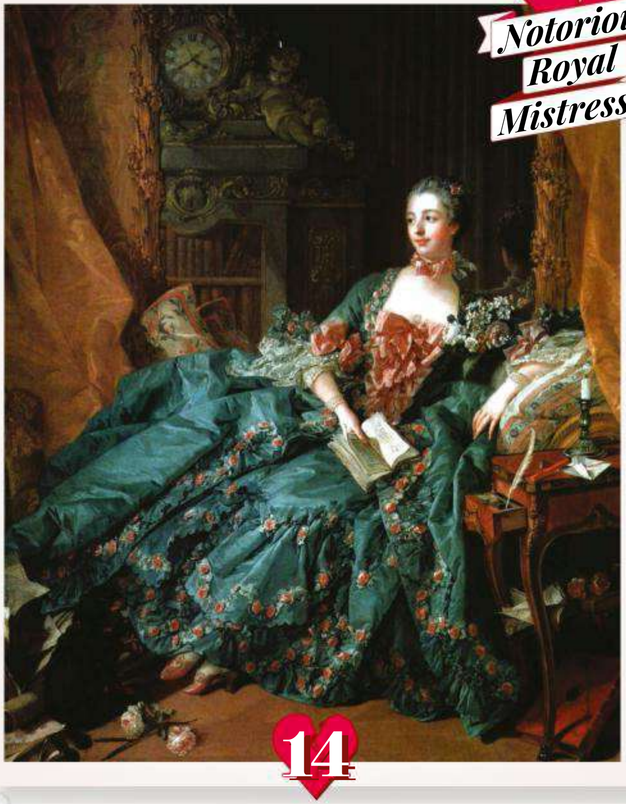
Empress Dowager Cixi

Royal lover: Xianfeng Emperor **Years as mistress:** 1852-61

In 1852, 16-year-old Cixi became one of many concubines of the Emperor Xianfeng. Among the concubines Cixi ranked relatively low - fifth rank - but in 1856 her position changed when she gave birth to a healthy son, Zaichun. Zaichun was Xianfeng's only surviving heir, and his birth significantly improved Cixi's standing at court. When Xianfeng died in 1861, Zaichun was only five years old, and Xianfeng had therefore provided for a regency council. However, this did not prevent Cixi from launching her own bid for power, and she successfully mounted a coup against the regents. Her intention was to exert power through her son, crowned Emperor Tongzhi. However, when Tongzhi died in 1875, Cixi was not ready to hand over the reins. Her three-year-old nephew, Guangxu, succeeded, and in order to retain her position, Cixi adopted him. Though she retired for a brief time when Guangxu reached his majority, she soon forced her way back to the forefront, and there she remained until her death in 1908. Cixi was opposed to many of the reforms implemented by her nephew, and eventually had him placed under virtual house arrest. Cixi has acquired a reputation for cruelty, and she did not hesitate when it came to the removal of her enemies - by fair means or foul. She was suspected of having been responsible for the poisoning of her nephew, who died only a day before her, and this is certainly a possibility. What is certain is that by her death, Cixi had become one of the most powerful women in China.

◆

She wasn't the best of the crop
(And the Emperor had rather a lot)
But she gave him a son
So she basically won
And schemed her way to the top



14

Madame de Pompadour

Royal lover: Louis XV of France
Years as mistress: 1745-64

Louis XV's official mistress became one of the most powerful women in 18th-century France. When friends introduced her at the royal court, it was not long before the king noticed her at a masked ball. Within a short space of time, Pompadour was in the king's bed, and she became his favourite mistress. She was given a luxurious apartment at the Palace of Versailles, where Louis frequently visited her by means of a secret staircase. The infatuated monarch even built the Petit Trianon in the grounds of Versailles to provide her with a peaceful retreat. More dangerously, Pompadour also became Louis's adviser, and though their sexual relationship ceased in the 1750s, she retained influence over the king for the rest of her life. She even provided Louis with replacement mistresses, ensuring they would pose no threat to herself. Pompadour had varied cultural interests, and under her auspices the Sevres porcelain factory was established. When Pompadour died of tuberculosis on 15 April 1764, Louis mourned the loss of his former lover and friend greatly.

◆

She met his majesty at the ball
And answered to his every call
She supported art
And broke his heart
When her coffin dropped into a hole

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ANCIENT CIVILISATIONS

Discover the great empires and civilisations that paved the way for the world as we know it

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A testament to the architectural skills of its Nabataean creators

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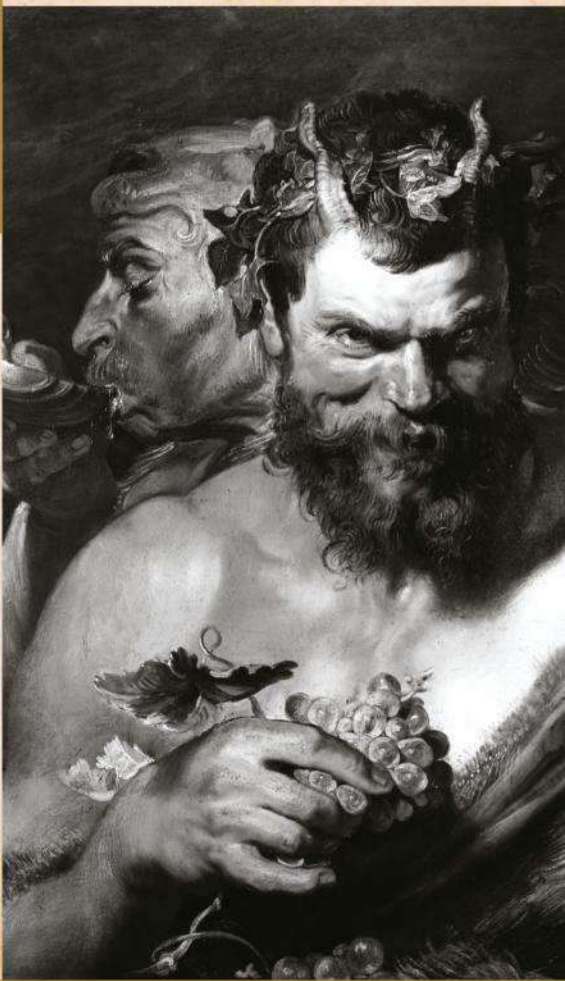
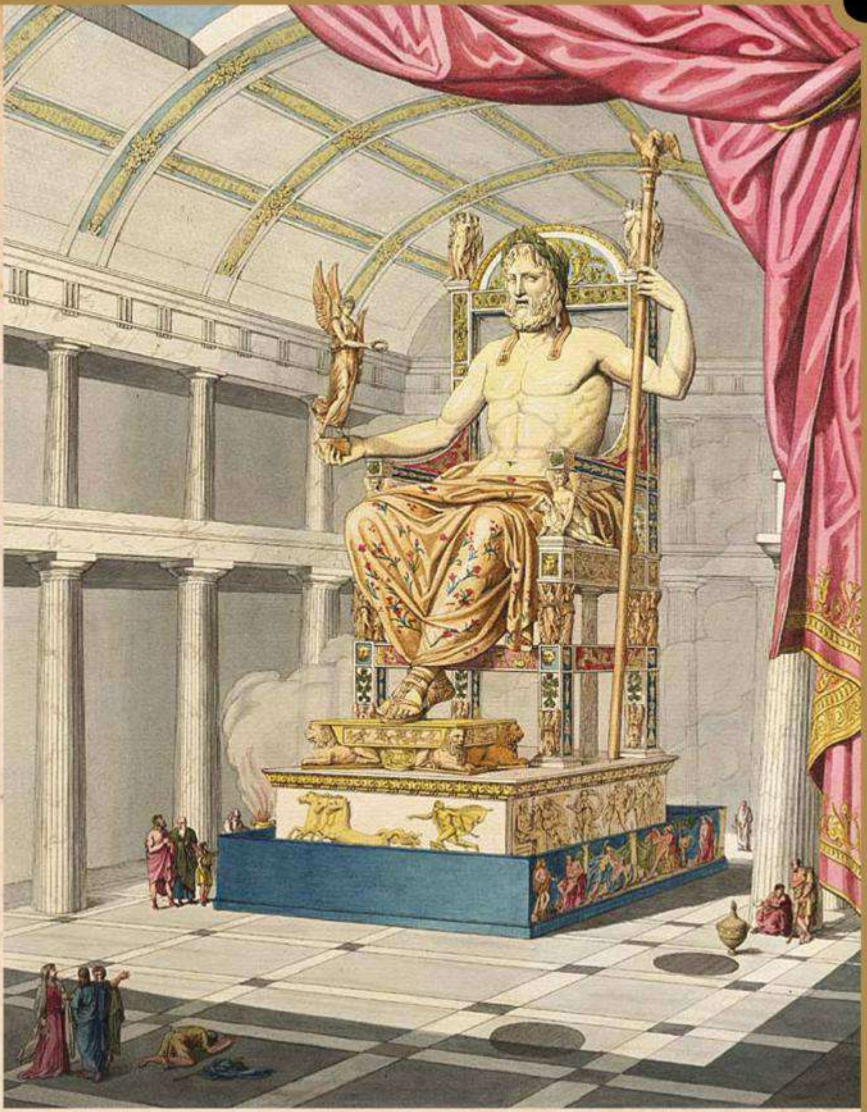
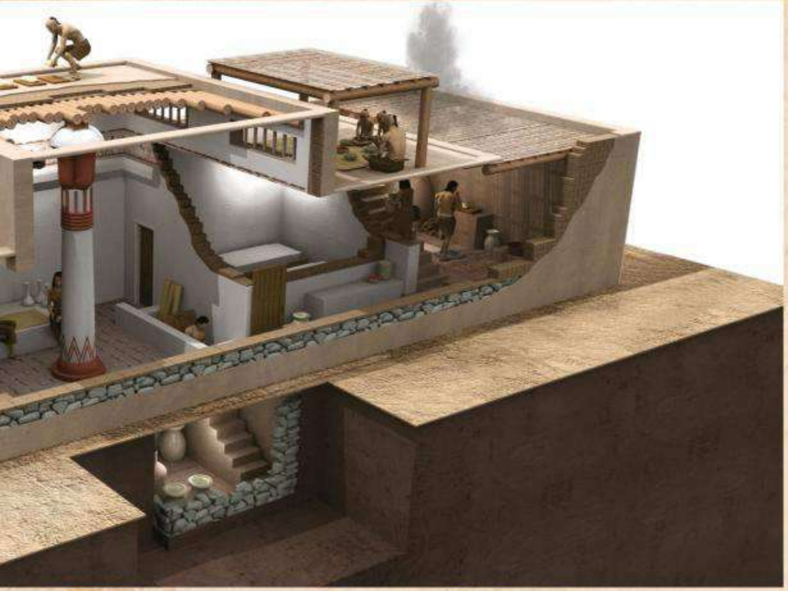
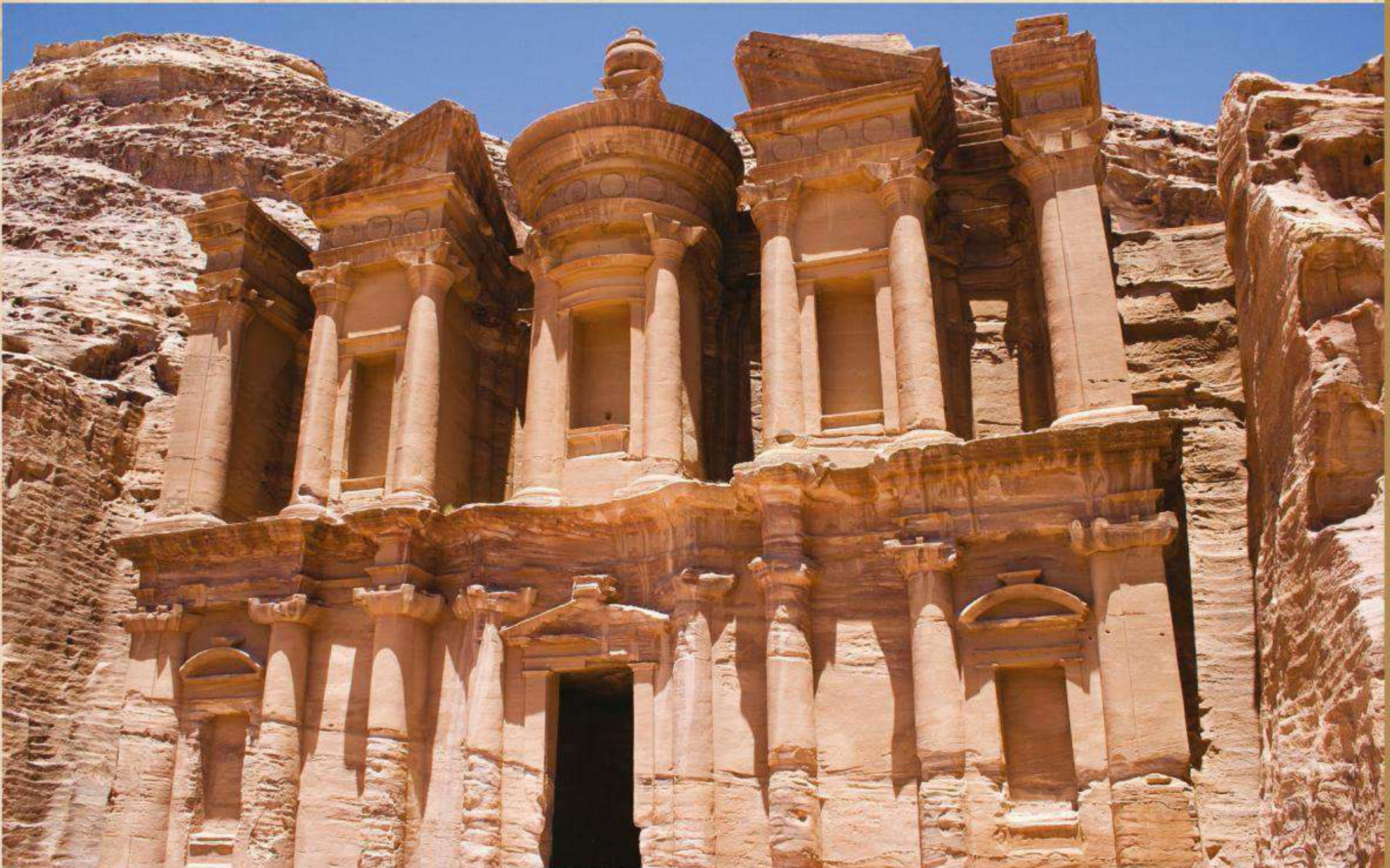








PETRA
THE CITY IN THE ROCK

Forged out of the cliffs, Petra is a rock-cut marvel that stands as testament to the architectural and engineering skills of its Nabataean creators

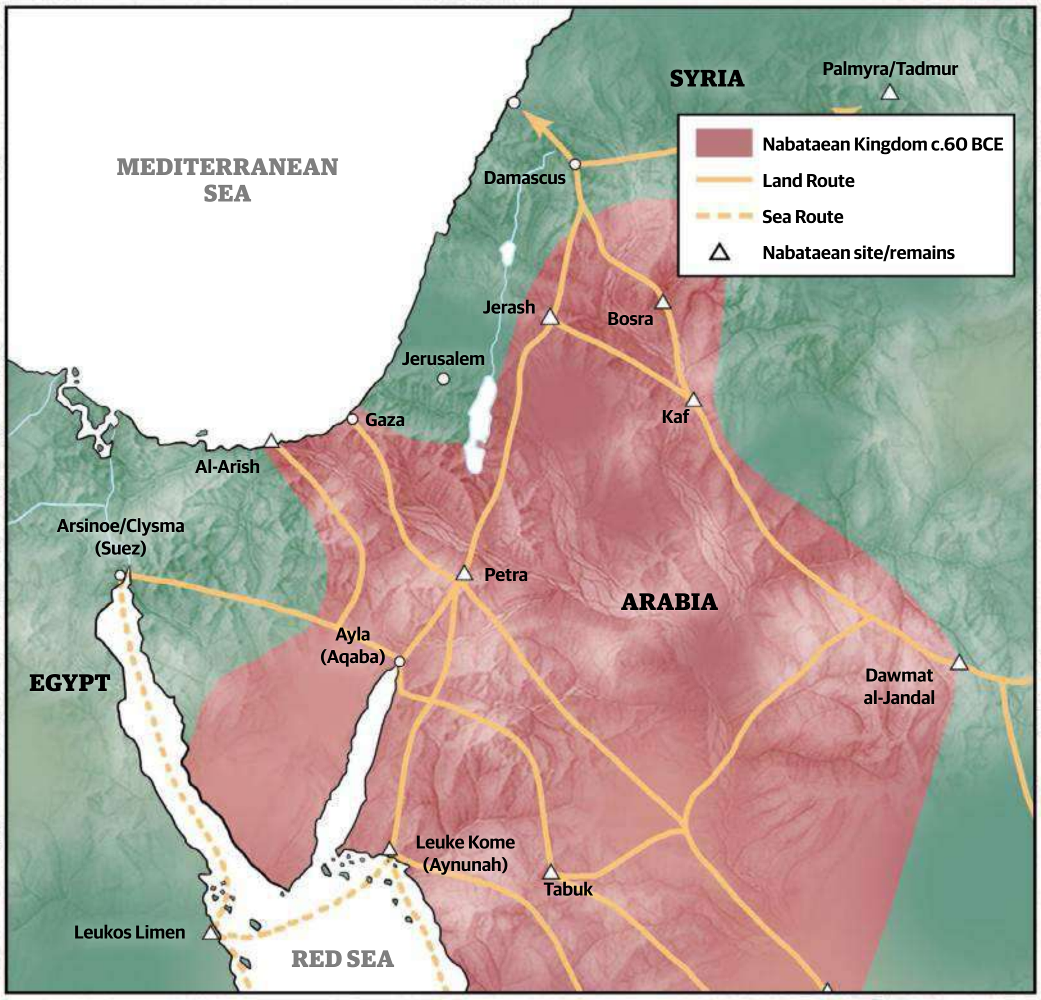
Frankincense resin isn't much to look at. The first time you see the dull-yellow lumps, it's hard to feel particularly inspired. Made from the dried-out sap of the Boswellia tree, these simple, knobbly marbles would be the catalyst for a trade route that, at its height, stretched west to the Mediterranean shore and north and east towards Asia Minor and Persia. The tribe of pastoral nomads that controlled that route would create one of the Middle East's most astonishing and inspiring ancient cities.

Carved out of the pink-tinged sandstone cliffs of Jordan's ruggedly arid Wadi Araba region, Petra's towering tombs and monuments are a breathtaking relic of the wealth and power of the Nabataean Kingdom. Today, the remains of the Nabataeans' grand capital, veiled within the surrounding mountains, showcase the civilisation's architectural ingenuity and a staggering understanding of hydraulic engineering. However, none of it would have been possible without those humble-looking lumps of frankincense.

JESSICA LEE

Author Bio

Jessica Lee is a travel writer and author of the *Jordan Footprint Handbook* guidebook. She spent five years leading tours throughout Jordan and has lived in the Middle East for the last ten years.



> "For a fiercely independent people, Petra's near impregnability would have made it an attractive site"

Incense was a big business in antiquity. All of the Mediterranean and Near East empires coveted aromatics, such as frankincense and myrrh, for their religious rituals as well as for medicinal purposes. The Hittites, Egyptians, Phoenicians, Assyrians, Greeks and later Romans all believed these incenses to be essential elements in their worship. The only problem was that these precious substances were only found in a few select geographical areas.

Frankincense and myrrh trees are endemic to the southern region of the Arabian Peninsula (today's Oman and Yemen). Trade in their resins was probably originally established by the Yemeni Minaean tribe, who utilised middlemen to help on the trade route once it passed beyond their area. In northern Arabia, those middlemen were a tribe of wandering desert herders called the Nabataeans, whose dabbling with the aromatics trade was beginning to make them very wealthy.

By the 2nd century BCE, those same middlemen started to take over the entire incense route, carving out a niche for themselves as trade controllers for the region. From then on, the aromatics from Arabia, as well as sought-after spices from as far away as India, would only flow west under their command. The riches and power this brought the Nabataeans meant a need for more centralised organisation and an end to nomadic life. Petra was to be the great jewel of a capital at their kingdom's central core.

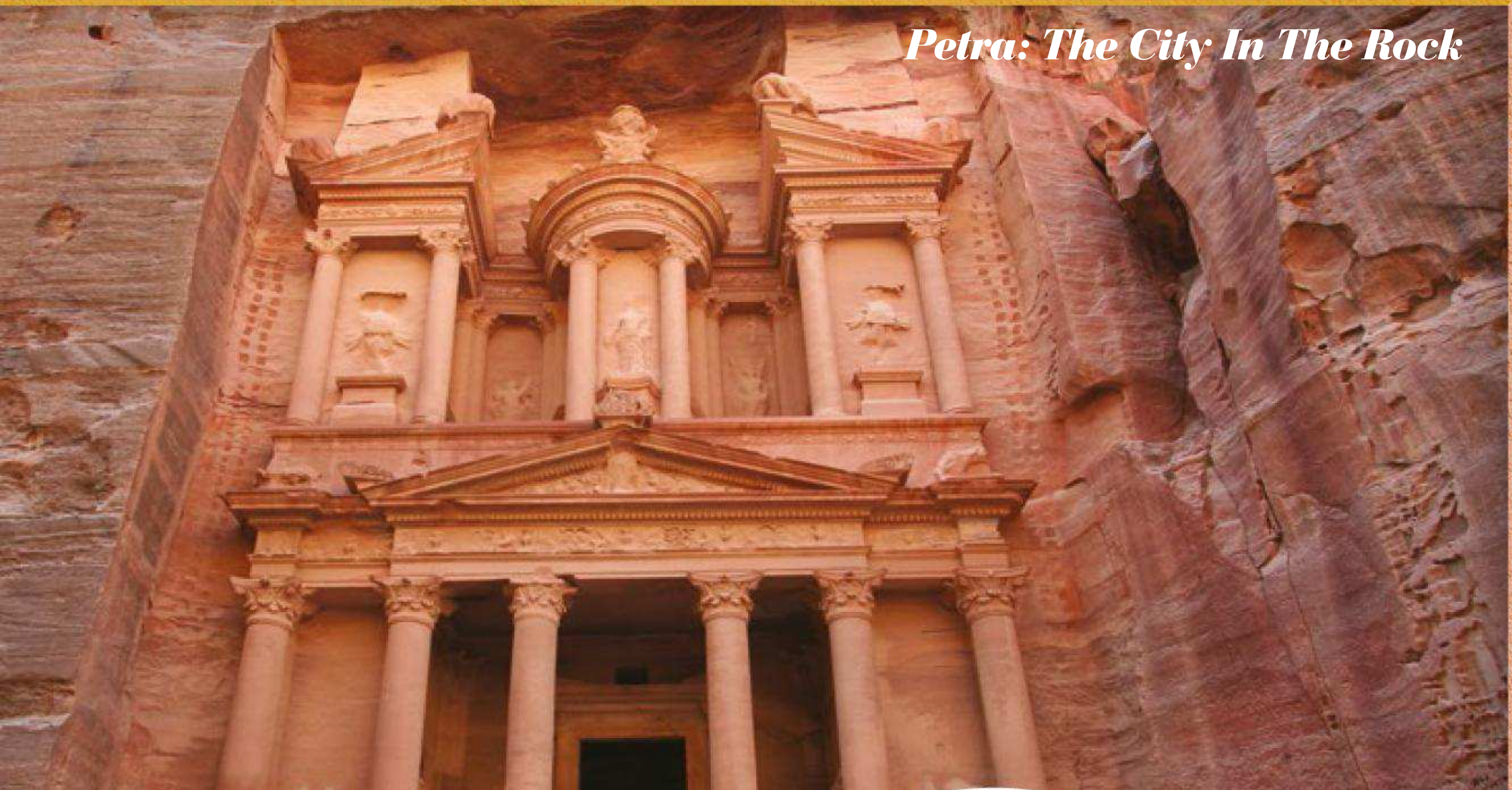
It's not known exactly when the Nabataeans first moved into the canyons and valleys of southern Jordan (the Biblical land of Edom) but archaeological evidence shows that they had utilised this area since at least the 3rd century BCE. Simple Nabataean building remains – most likely storage buildings that would have been erected near their nomad tents – dating from this time have been unearthed in Petra. By the 2nd century BCE though, as the Nabataeans organised themselves from various collectives within the tribe to be ruled over by one king, this easily defendable spot they'd previously used as a camp began to be used as their power base.

For a fiercely independent people, Petra's near impregnability would have made it an attractive site. Already in 312 BCE they had repelled attacks on their area by the army of Macedonian General Antigonus I Monophthalmus (commonly known as Antigonus the One-Eyed) and stymied further encroachment by bribing would-be conquerors with diplomatic gifts. They chose their site so well, in fact, that after their eventual demise, the grand city of Petra would fade from history, forgotten by all but the local tribes of the area. The Crusaders of the 12th century knew of it, even building two fortresses on mountain summits within the Petra area, however it wasn't until the Swiss explorer Johann Ludwig Burckhardt passed through the area in 1812 with a local guide who knew the way that Petra was reintroduced to the Western world.

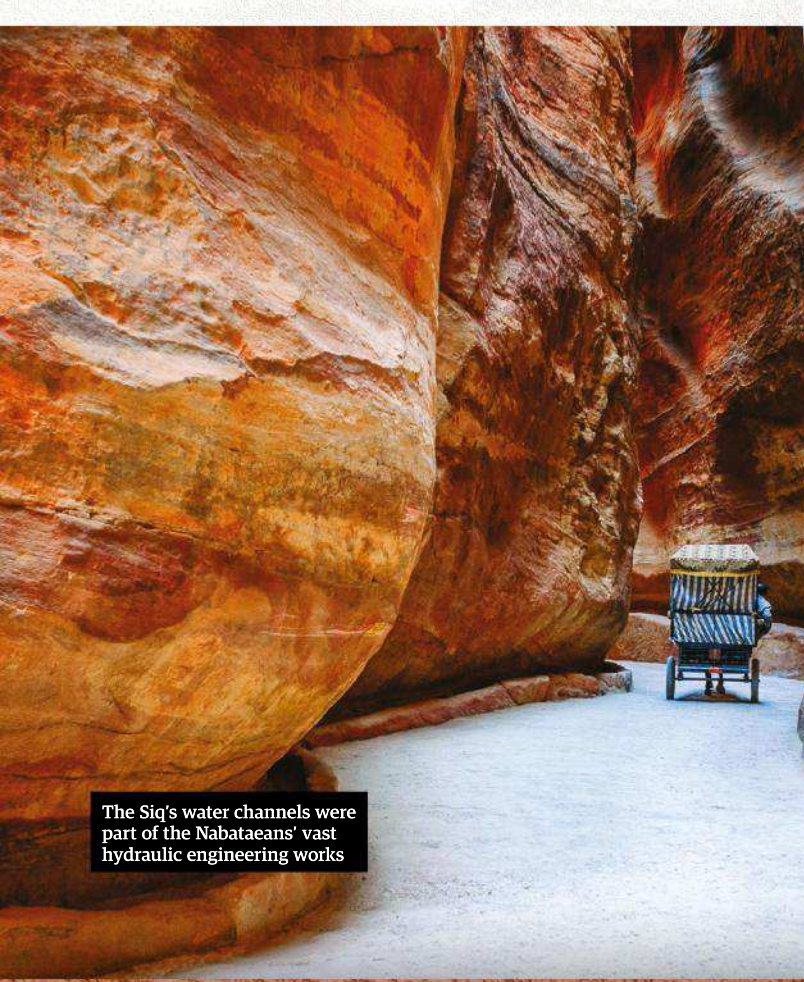
Burckhardt was awed by the towering monuments cut from the rock when he entered Petra. It's the same emotion that visitors experience today. The Siq, a narrow ravine pinned between dramatically soaring rock walls up to 180 metres high, guides visitors into a vast area of furrowed wadis (valleys) between rugged jebels (mountains). The 39.6-metre-high Al-Khazneh (the Treasury) looms over the main entrance into the city from the Siq, while up a series of processional staircases cut into the mountainside of Jebel ed-Deir is the colossal 45-metre-high façade of Ed-Deir (the Monastery), which dwarfs all who gaze up at it. Between these two most famed and photographed monuments is the wide main wadi with numerous tomb façades studding the cliff faces and a grand colonnaded street, lined with temple ruins, that was once Petra's city centre.

The stonemasons carved Petra's oversized monuments into the high cliffs without the use of any specialised technology. Luckily for us, a number of unfinished façades within Petra have allowed archaeologists to glean a clear idea of their building method. It is known that the Nabataeans began by carving at the highest point of the building and then worked downwards towards the ground, with the workers probably using either scaffolding or rope to climb up to work at the higher levels. Using just pick axes and chisels, the craggy rock face was first smoothed out to create a flat surface before the building's design was outlined upon the rock. Originally, the detailed carving work of the façades may have been carried out by master stonemasons brought in from cities such as Alexandria in Egypt, who went on to teach local artisans their craft. When the decoration was finished, the cubic interior chambers were then hollowed out from the cliff.

An economy fed by commerce imbued the Nabataeans with a distinctly cosmopolitan outlook. Exposed to the lifestyles and cultures of many peoples and empires through their travels and trade, these were a people who looked outward and were unafraid of new experiences and influences. This natural confidence developed into a talent for cherry picking the best bits of other cultures and adapting and fusing it to suit their needs. Petra's architecture is an expression of their eclectic style.



View of Al-Khazneh (the Treasury), set into its high cliff face



The Siq's water channels were part of the Nabataeans' vast hydraulic engineering works

Nabataean architecture in its purest stylistic form is quite austere and angular. No figurative images are displayed and there are little in the way of ornate flourishes. Earlier dated tombs often use an Assyrian crow-step (a simple staircase design) on their upper level, with plain columns siding a mammoth doorway decorated only with a Doric frieze. Gods are represented in rock reliefs by plain stone blocks or simple, and often otherwise unadorned, rectangular carvings known as betyls ('house of god'). However, later buildings became more ornate.

Petra's famous Al-Khazneh has a distinctly Hellenistic design and mixes iconography and symbolism from Egypt, Rome and Greece. Petra's theatre is built in classic Roman style but adjusted accordingly to be suitable for the city's unique rocky location – being carved out of the bottom of a cliff. This fluidity and assimilation of different cultural influences is best seen in how the Nabataean pantheon of gods slowly evolved, changed and was represented.

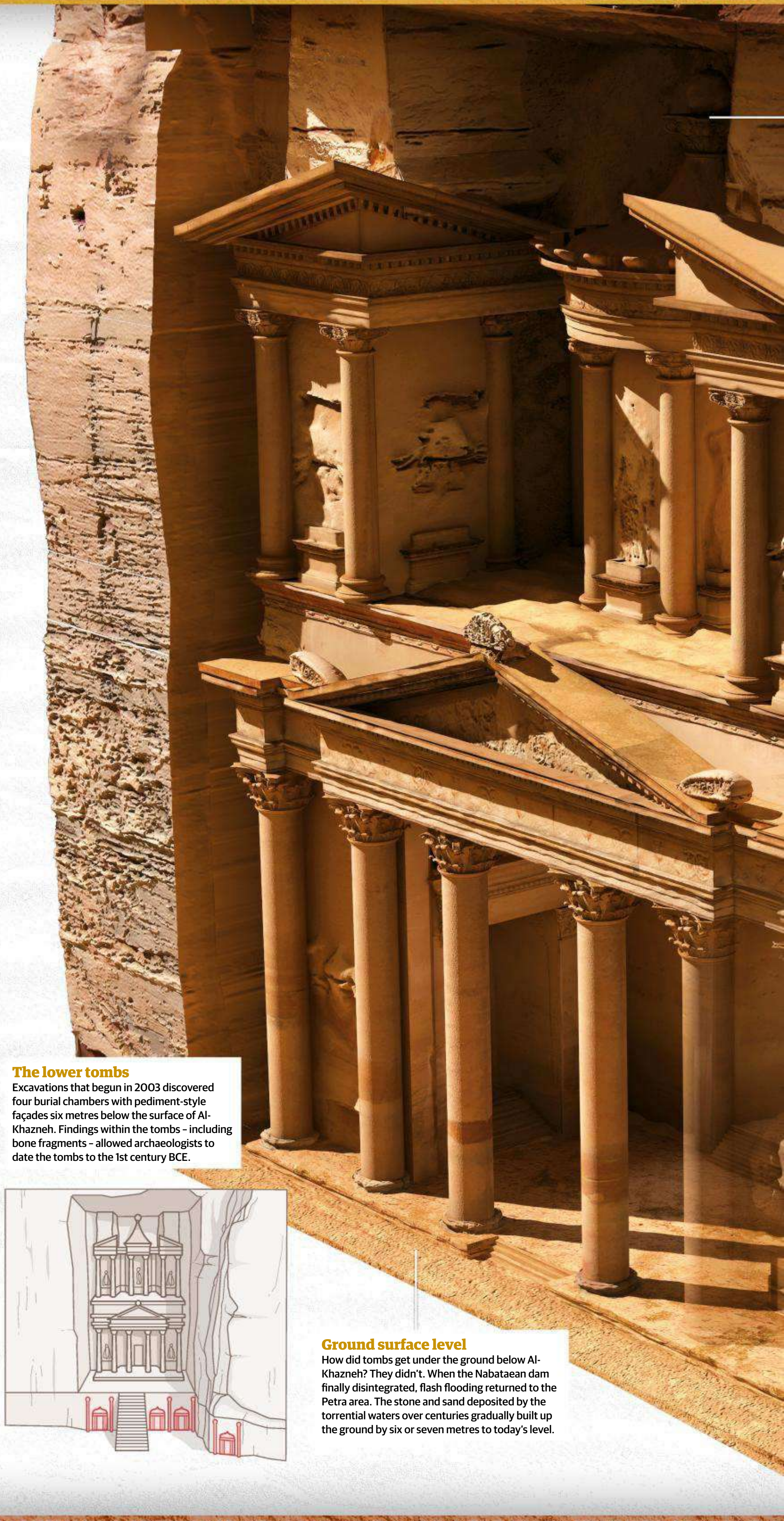
While the Nabataeans continued to honour their traditional Arabian gods, they had no problem merging their own deities with those from neighbouring cultures. In the Nabataean pantheon, the overall god was Dushara, who, with goddesses al-Uzza and Allat, reigned over a series of lesser deities. Representations of foreign Greek, Roman, Phoenician, Egyptian and Syrian gods, particularly Aphrodite, Osiris, Isis, Zeus, Dionysus, Atargatis and Tyre, slowly entered the mix though. The central bas relief on Al-Khazneh's façade depicts two Amazonians either side of a goddess thought to be either the Roman Tyche or Egyptian Isis. Both foreign goddesses would have been identified with their traditional goddess al-Uzza, and the Nabataeans seem to have had no problem featuring these deities figuratively, unlike their original Arabian gods.

It is in their engineering ability, though, that the Nabataeans' talent for adaptation truly shines. As desert nomads, living in one of the world's harshest environments, they fully understood the great importance of water to thrive, and in Petra, they utilised their skills to its greatest achievement. Petra was prone to dangerous flash flooding during the winter months with the flood torrents flowing down Wadi Musa (the valley just outside of the city area), smashing through the Siq and down into the valley basin of the main city; a seasonal disaster that could cause serious damage and loss of life in the city. In the 1st century BCE, Nabataean engineers diverted this water into the side canyon of Wadi Muthlim by building a dam structure just outside the entry to the Siq. To demonstrate how effective these ancient engineers were with this method, today, modern dam structures built in the 1990s have been constructed over the original building works.

Nabataean engineers also harnessed the water of the nearby springs of Ain Musa and Ain Braq for everyday use, creating a vast network of water channels from the springs that flowed through the countryside into the city that could supply all of Petra's daily and agricultural needs. Evidence of these vast hydraulic engineering works can still be seen in the surviving terracotta water pipes that run along the walls of the Siq.

Despite all these remaining building works that show how Petra managed to function and thrive, today it can be difficult for visitors to Petra to evoke a sense of a once-bustling city. Walking between Petra's gigantic tomb façades can seem more like discovering a vast ancient necropolis rather than a lived-in capital. Petra, though, was very much a busy hub of commerce. The trouble is that the residential quarters, built on a much more modest scale than its megalithic tombs, have long since crumbled away. The small amount of remains of residential houses that have been excavated so far (on the Zantur slope behind the city centre ruins) are also easily missed by visitors in favour of those awe-inspiring cliff-side tombs.

Petra's city centre is the best area to imagine what the city would have once looked like. Constructed at some stage in the early-1st century when the Nabataean kingdom was at its height, a

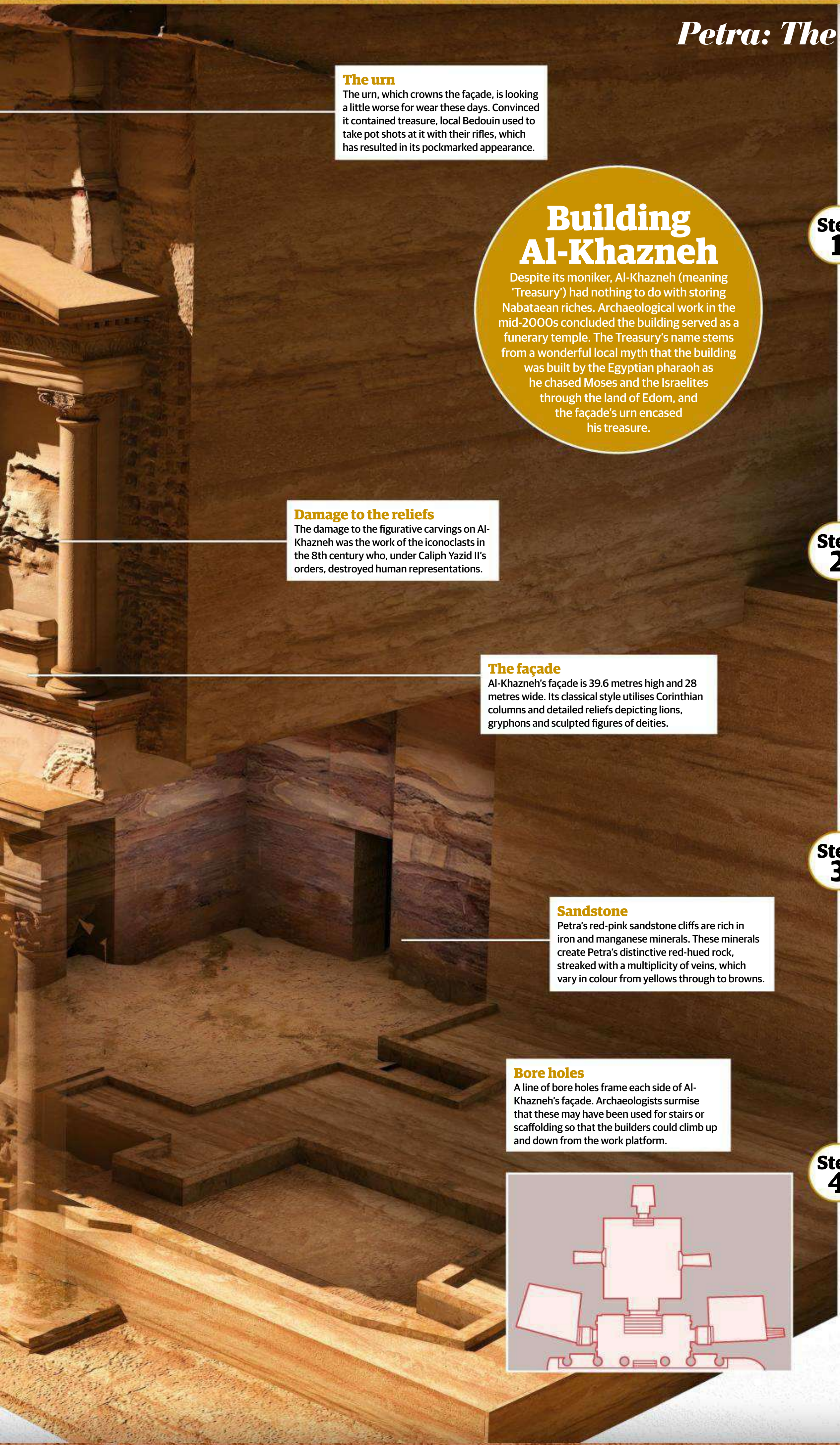


The lower tombs
Excavations that begun in 2003 discovered four burial chambers with pediment-style façades six metres below the surface of Al-Khazneh. Findings within the tombs – including bone fragments – allowed archaeologists to date the tombs to the 1st century BCE.

Ground surface level
How did tombs get under the ground below Al-Khazneh? They didn't. When the Nabataean dam finally disintegrated, flash flooding returned to the Petra area. The stone and sand deposited by the torrential waters over centuries gradually built up the ground by six or seven metres to today's level.

Building Al-Khazneh

Despite its moniker, Al-Khazneh (meaning 'Treasury') had nothing to do with storing Nabataean riches. Archaeological work in the mid-2000s concluded the building served as a funerary temple. The Treasury's name stems from a wonderful local myth that the building was built by the Egyptian pharaoh as he chased Moses and the Israelites through the land of Edom, and the façade's urn encased his treasure.



The urn
The urn, which crowns the façade, is looking a little worse for wear these days. Convinced it contained treasure, local Bedouin used to take pot shots at it with their rifles, which has resulted in its pockmarked appearance.

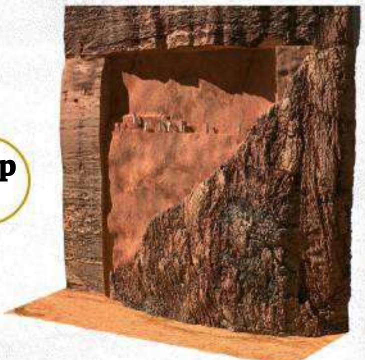
Damage to the reliefs
The damage to the figurative carvings on Al-Khazneh was the work of the iconoclasts in the 8th century who, under Caliph Yazid II's orders, destroyed human representations.

The façade
Al-Khazneh's façade is 39.6 metres high and 28 metres wide. Its classical style utilises Corinthian columns and detailed reliefs depicting lions, gryphons and sculpted figures of deities.

Sandstone
Petra's red-pink sandstone cliffs are rich in iron and manganese minerals. These minerals create Petra's distinctive red-hued rock, streaked with a multiplicity of veins, which vary in colour from yellows through to browns.

Bore holes
A line of bore holes frame each side of Al-Khazneh's façade. Archaeologists surmise that these may have been used for stairs or scaffolding so that the builders could climb up and down from the work platform.

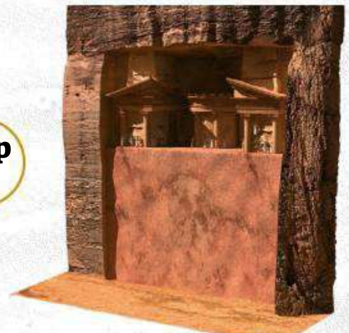
Step 1



Flatten the cliff face

Starting 39 metres up the cliff, the builders tunnelled straight along the cliff face to create a platform to stand on. Then, using pickaxes, they gradually worked downwards, creating a smooth, flat rock surface they could then work from.

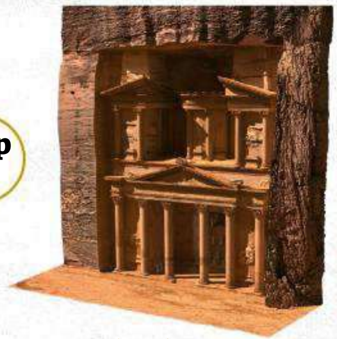
Step 2



Carve the façade

Another wider ledge was cut from which to carve downwards to create the decorative façade. There was no margin for error. Builders had to ensure that the weight of the upper section did not become too heavy for the bottom, causing it to collapse.

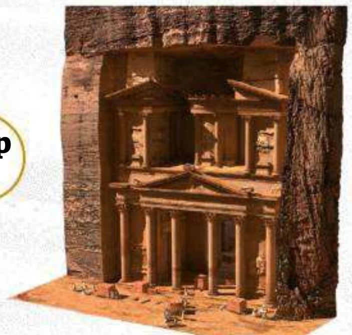
Step 3



Create the interior

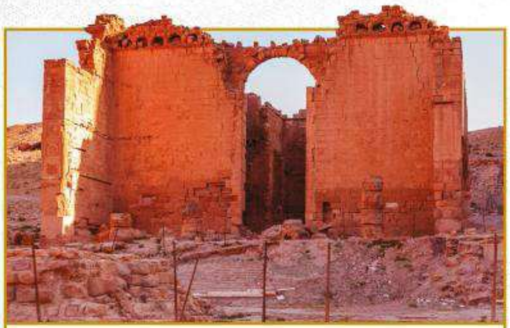
The same top-down method was used to create the entrance portico behind the columns, and the inner chambers. A tunnel was cut into the cliff before being widened into the portico, and then further tunnels created, which became chambers.

Step 4



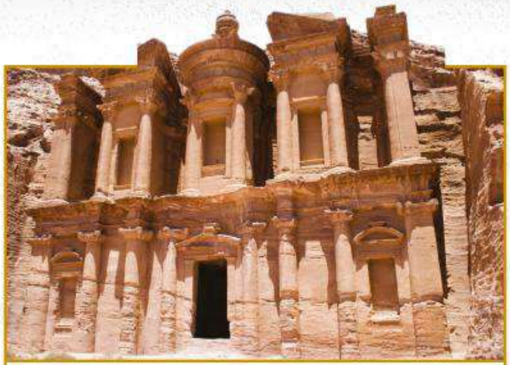
Remove the waste

Builders removed 6,000 cubic metres of rock from the interior. The resulting rubble created from both carving the façade and hollowing out the interior chambers was cleared away and utilised for building other structures.



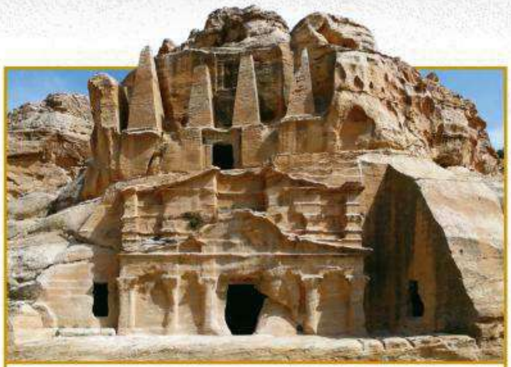
1. Qasr al-Bint

The 'Palace of the Pharaoh's Daughter' is thought to have served as the city's main temple. Worship of Nabataean deities Dushara and al-Uzza is thought to have been centred here.



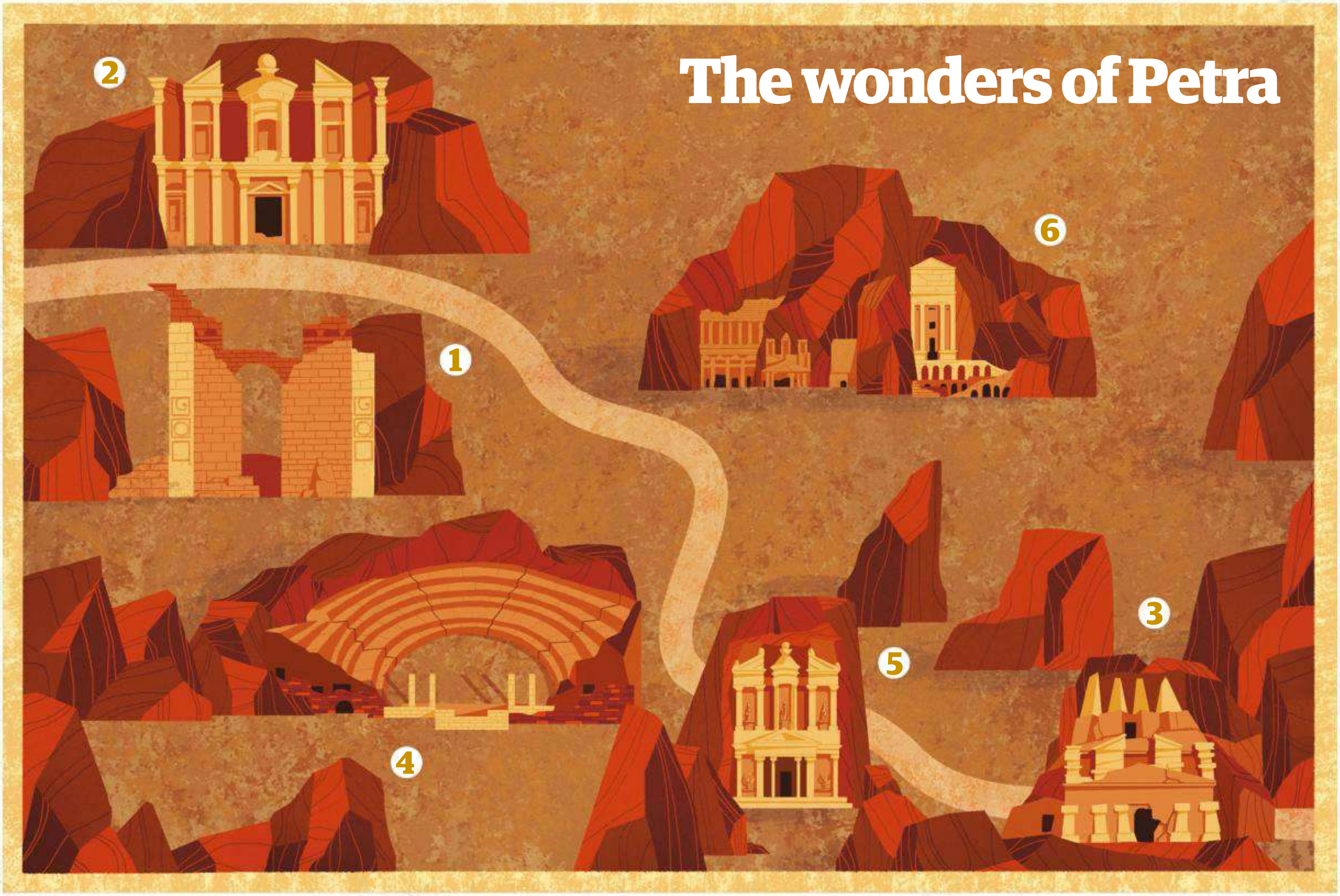
2. Ad-Deir

Petra's largest monument, the 'Monastery' sits on a high plateau of Jebel ad-Deir. It's thought to have served as a temple-cenotaph commemorating king Obodas I.



3. Obelisk tomb

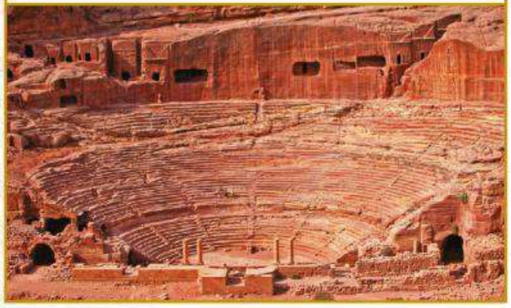
Named for the four obelisks that dominate its façade, the Obelisk tomb sits above the façade of the Bab el Siq Triclinium (a banqueting hall), which is believed to have been carved later.



The wonders of Petra

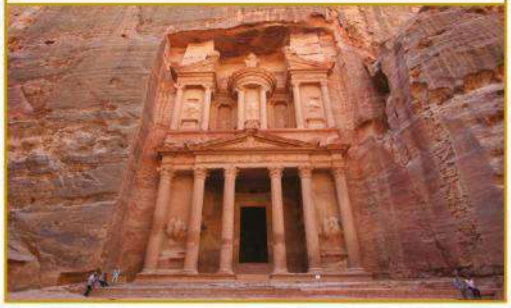
4. The theatre

The theatre exactly follows Roman design rules but with the Nabataean architectural twist of the entire structure being hollowed out from a sheer rock face.



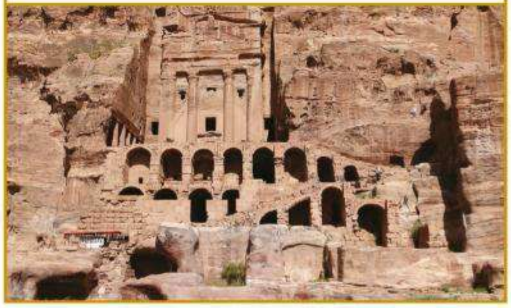
5. Al-Khazneh

Archaeologists theorise that this was the mortuary temple of either king Aretas III or Aretas IV, built as a place to worship the sovereign as well as being his burial place.



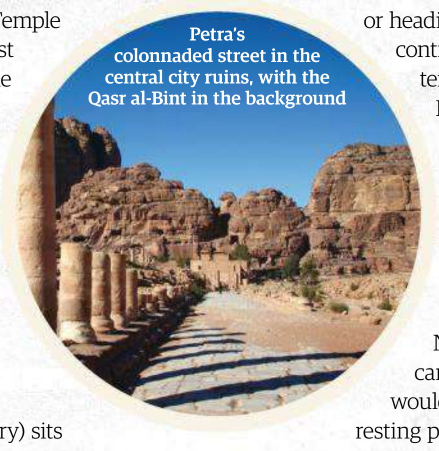
6. Urn tomb

The multi-level Urn Tomb is the first of five façades (known together as the Royal Tombs) that loom over Petra's colonnaded street from a ledge cut into Jebel al-Khubta.



grand 18-metre-wide colonnaded street, lined with public and civic buildings, was constructed in the wadi's basin at Petra's core. This would have been the downtown area of the city. Along this road are three of Petra's major public buildings. The Qasr al-Bint (theorised by most archaeologists to have probably functioned as the city's main temple), the later constructed Temple of the Winged Lion and the vast terraced structure known as the Great Temple, which, quite probably, despite its modern name, functioned as an administrative centre rather than a place of worship.

From the end of the colonnaded street, a trail threads its way up a series of processional staircases to a high plateau upon Jebel ed-Deir where the enormous façade of Ad-Deir (the Monastery) sits carved into a cliff. Petra's largest monument, Ad-Deir, has a name – like Al-Khazneh and the Great Temple – that is something of a misnomer. Most experts theorise that its original function was as a cenotaph-temple (built in memorial to one of Petra's sovereigns). Its modern name stems from the series of crosses, dating from Petra's Byzantine era, found carved into the walls of the interior chamber when the building seems to have been adapted to function as a place of Christian worship.


Petra's colonnaded street in the central city ruins, with the Qasr al-Bint in the background

Petra sat right at the core of the Nabataean kingdom as the main centre along the incense route for camel caravans coming in from or heading out to the desert. However, control of the entire trail's tentacles meant that smaller Nabataean fixed settlements and caravan stations can be found scattered all along the route. On the Arabian Peninsula (in modern-day Saudi Arabia), the ruins of Hegra (now known as Mada'in Saleh) contain 131 Nabataean tomb façades carved into the cliff face. This would have been an important resting point along the trail through the Hejaz region. In Israel's Negev Desert, the ruins of Nabataean towns Haluza, Mamshit, Avdat and Shivta linked Petra to its Mediterranean port at Gaza. Nabataean inscriptions and ruins have been found in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, and in the town of Bosra, in southern Syria, which in the late-1st century became the Nabataeans second capital, there are substantial remains.

This control, along with a powerful centralised organisation and diplomatic means, meant the Nabataeans managed to stave off the empire builders who were surrounding them for an impressively long time. Their autonomy was finally ended in 106 when Trajan's Roman army conquered Petra, and the Nabataean kingdom as a whole was absorbed into Rome's province of Arabia. Despite the loss of independence, trading didn't cease. Petra remained an important commercial centre right up to the 3rd century, by then a flourishing bishopric with a large Christian population. It was the region's many earthquakes that finally spelled doom for the city. After two violent ones in 363 and 419, and then another in 551, much of the city was deserted and left to the rubble. With the city's demise, the Nabataeans, who had once played such a dominant role in the region, seemed also to vanish.

When Johann Ludwig Burckhardt first entered the city, he encountered the Bdoul tribe, who lived amid the ruins. This tribe lived in caves surrounding the monuments and in the tomb chambers themselves right up until the mid-1980s when they were finally moved by the government into modern housing at a purposely built village settlement near the archaeological site. Some of the Bdoul claim to be the descendants of the Nabataeans, but this theory has never been proven. Unlike Petra's remarkable buildings and colossal façades that have stood the test of time, what happened to the people who built them remains one of the Middle East's enduring mysteries.

> "These were a people who looked outward and were unafraid of new experiences and influences"

Petra's main trail – from Al-Khazneh to the colonnaded street – is lined with tomb façades

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HANNIBAL BARCA

ENEMY OF ROME

The vengeance, ingenuity and war elephants that brought the Republic to its knees

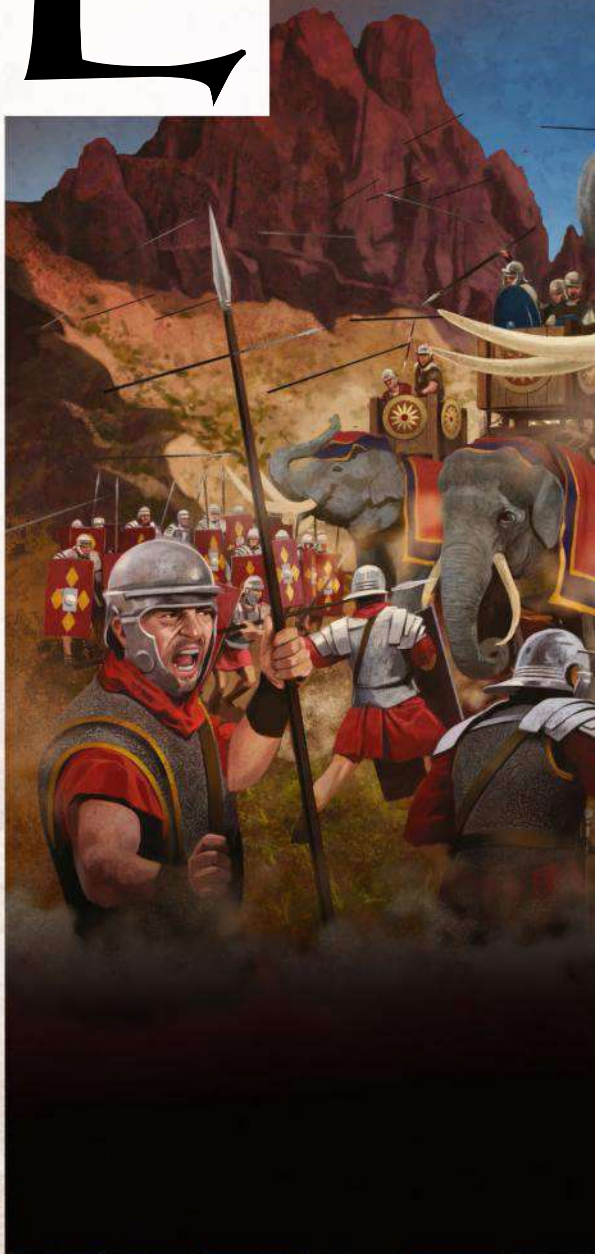
Two armies waited at Zama, in October 202 BCE, ready to do battle. On the one side were the Romans, on the other the Carthaginians. At stake was the very survival of Carthage. The commander of the Carthaginians, Hannibal Barca, had been hurriedly recalled from Italy to defend his home city from Roman attack. The young Publius Cornelius Scipio, in command of the Romans, rode out to meet him in the no-man's land between the armies. Would the Romans be interested in negotiating, Hannibal asked? Why risk a battle when peace could be had without a fight? Scipio refused outright. Carthage had already cynically used a previous truce to summon Hannibal back to Africa, he said, and then resumed the war once he arrived to command its army. Scipio accused Hannibal of trying to profit from Carthage's own treachery.

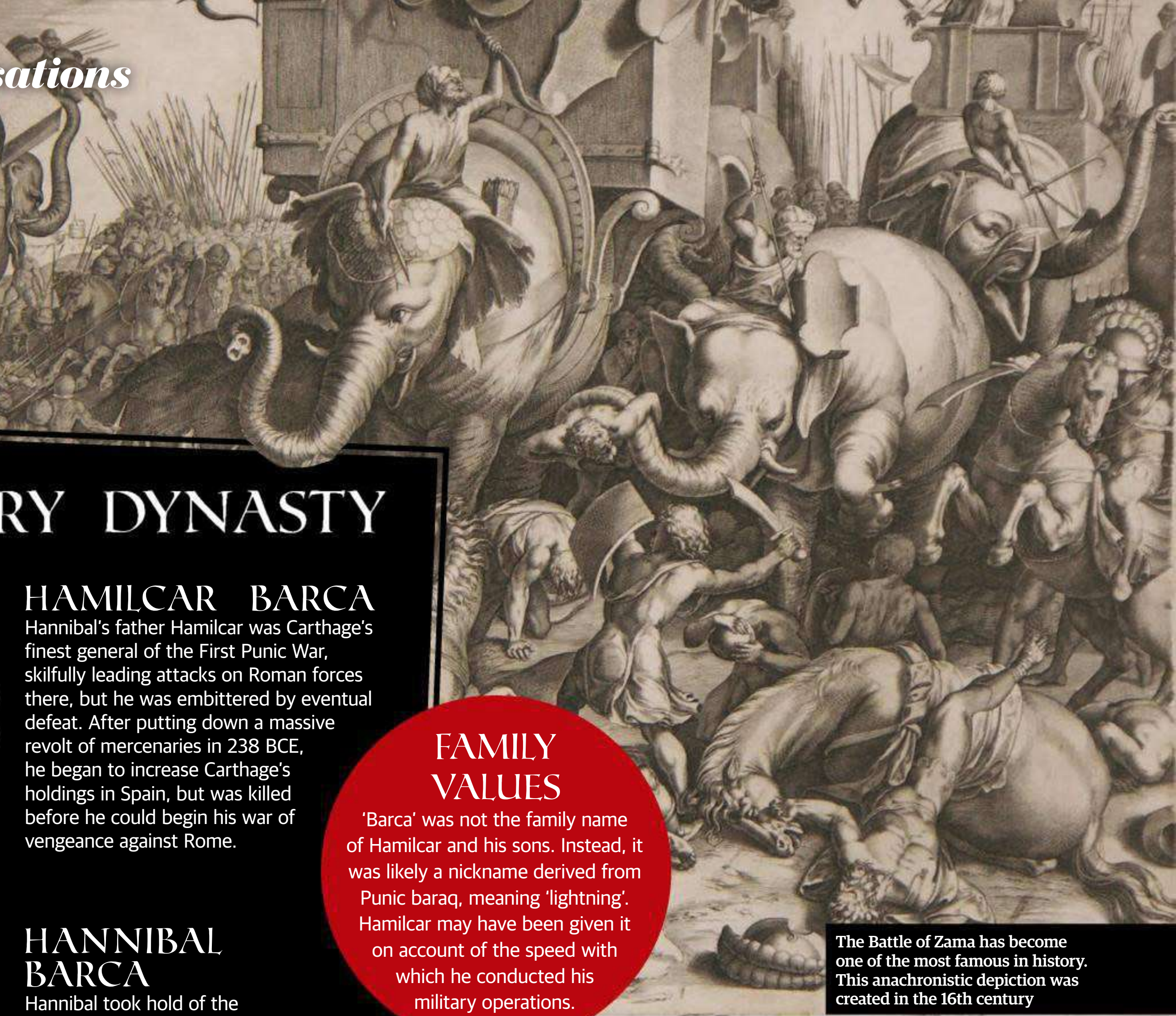
The fates of the titanic powers of Rome and Carthage could only be decided by a great trial of arms. The generals returned to their men and prepared them for the battle to come. Hannibal would fight one last time on behalf of his people. Though he had rampaged through Italy for 16 years and had won spectacular victories there, he had been unable to defeat Rome.

Hannibal's road to Zama began even before his birth in 247 BCE, during the First Punic War with Rome. The battle for supremacy lasted more than 20 years, before Carthage finally succumbed to Roman persistence and naval might. Crushed at the battle of the Aegates Islands, Carthage was forced to accept humiliating peace terms from the triumphant Romans. The empire was stripped of its holdings in Sicily, which had been built up over centuries of colonisation, and forced to pay a huge indemnity to Rome.

Making matters worse was the subsequent arrogant behaviour of the Romans. In 238 BCE, they seized Sardinia under the pretext that Carthage was plotting another strike on the Romans. At the time, however, Carthage was distracted by a brutal war with its former mercenaries, and could do nothing to prevent it. The theft of the island may have gone unchallenged, but it instilled a fervent desire for revenge in the hearts of many Carthaginians.

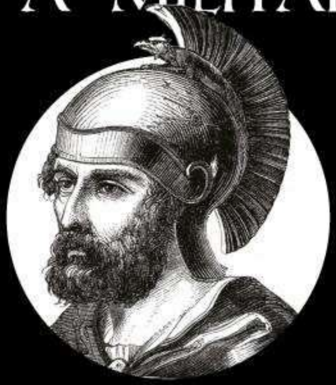
Foremost among these was Hamilcar Barca, Carthage's leading general in the latter years of the First Punic War. Hamilcar had fought the Romans to a standstill in Sicily, operating out of his base of Mount Eryx where he conducted





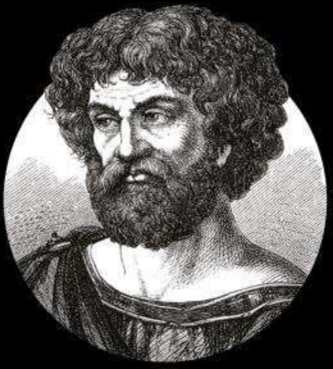
The Battle of Zama has become one of the most famous in history. This anachronistic depiction was created in the 16th century

A MILITARY DYNASTY



HAMILCAR BARCA

Hannibal's father Hamilcar was Carthage's finest general of the First Punic War, skilfully leading attacks on Roman forces there, but he was embittered by eventual defeat. After putting down a massive revolt of mercenaries in 238 BCE, he began to increase Carthage's holdings in Spain, but was killed before he could begin his war of vengeance against Rome.



HANNIBAL BARCA

Hannibal took hold of the Carthaginian dominion in Spain and led a highly trained army of mercenaries out of Spain, across Gaul, into Italy. Though he won spectacular victories over several Roman armies, he lacked the power to defeat Rome completely. He tried to prevent the final defeat of Carthage at Zama but was defeated by Scipio.

HASDRUBAL BARCA

Younger brother to Hannibal, Hasdrubal Barca was one of Carthage's primary generals in Spain. He was defeated by Scipio at Baecula in 208 BCE but still managed to march with his army to Hannibal's aid in Italy. He was slain at the Battle of the Metaurus in 207 BCE.

MAGO BARCA

The youngest of Hamilcar's sons, Mago commanded a Carthaginian army in Spain and was defeated by Scipio at Ilipa in 206 BCE. He evacuated Spain shortly after and established a second front against Rome in northern Italy. He was recalled to Carthage in 203 BCE to stop Scipio but died en route while still at sea.

FAMILY VALUES

'Barca' was not the family name of Hamilcar and his sons. Instead, it was likely a nickname derived from Punic baraq, meaning 'lightning'. Hamilcar may have been given it on account of the speed with which he conducted his military operations.

daring hit-and-run raids on the Romans around him. The decision of Carthage's government to make peace on Roman terms was a shock, and he never reconciled himself to defeat.

Hamilcar intended to restore Carthage's position in an eventual second war with Rome. First, however, he needed to rebuild the Carthaginian army, which had been battered by the wars with Rome and then the mercenaries. His plan was to go to Spain, where he would expand Carthage's holdings and recruit tough Spanish tribesmen to fight. Carthage's armies had long been composed exclusively of mercenaries from around the Mediterranean world. Only the officers were natives of Carthage; the rest were foreigners. From Africa, Spain, Gaul, and the Balearic Isles they came, lured by the generous pay of the Carthaginians. Among the best fighters were the superb light cavalry of Numidia in North Africa. The Romans would be at a deep disadvantage in battle until they found a way to recruit Numidians of their own.

Wealth was something Carthage normally possessed in abundance. Known to the Romans as 'Punics' because their ancestors had originally come from Phoenicia, the Carthaginians had the same talent for commerce. After the war with Rome, however, money was in short supply and Carthage was burdened by the weighty indemnity. In search of much-needed silver and territory, Hamilcar led an expedition to the

Iberian Peninsula in 237 BCE. He was confident they would be successful, having taken part in a sacred ritual before departing: a human had been sacrificed to the gods. Hamilcar had brought his nine-year-old son, Hannibal, to the altar, made him place his hand on the blood of the victim and swear his unending hatred of the Romans. The young boy is said to have recited the oath: "I swear so soon as age will permit I will use fire and steel to arrest the destiny of Rome." It was a promise the young Hannibal would keep.

Together, father and son sailed for Iberia, and their forces were ruthless in their suppression of the Spanish. Hamilcar killed many, and recruited others to join his cause. He also increased the productivity of Spanish mines, sending silver by the shipful to Carthage. With this money, Hamilcar easily paid the mercenaries of his swelling army. Yet Hamilcar was never to lead this army of vengeance against Rome. In 228 BCE, he was betrayed by Spanish allies, and died trying to escape them. Control of Carthage's army in Spain eventually fell to Hannibal, who had been raised among the soldiers of his father and held their unwavering loyalty. He increased Carthage's dominion in the peninsula, but then ran into trouble when he struck at Saguntum, a city friendly with Rome. Though he quickly captured it, his aggression caused Rome to declare war on Carthage in 218 BCE.

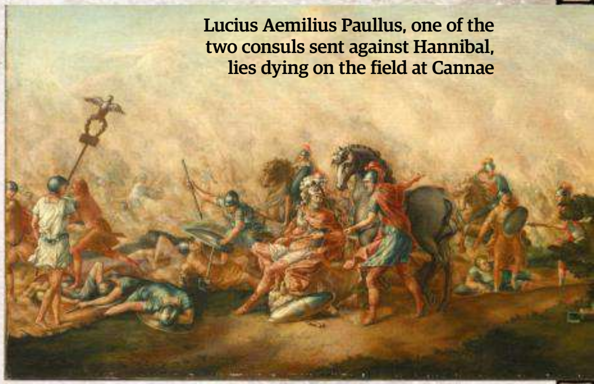
"HANNIBAL HAD LOST OVER HALF OF HIS FORCES REACHING ITALY"

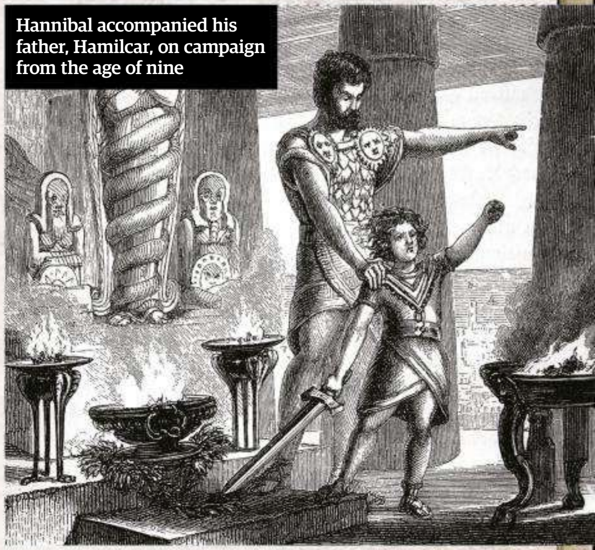
Hannibal lost little time in putting into motion his plan for the invasion of Italy. He believed that Rome could be defeated by stripping the Republic of its Italian allies, many of which had been brought under Roman dominion by force only recently. Since the Romans had won control of the sea in the First Punic War, Hannibal would have to take the long overland route across Gaul to strike in Italy. He marched out of Spain at the head of an army of 50,000 infantry, 9,000 cavalry, and a small corps of elephants. The trek through southern Gaul was arduous, and along the way he encountered hostile Gallic tribes who bled his army. He crossed the mighty Rhône river and then marched through the Alps, the traditional frontier of Italy.

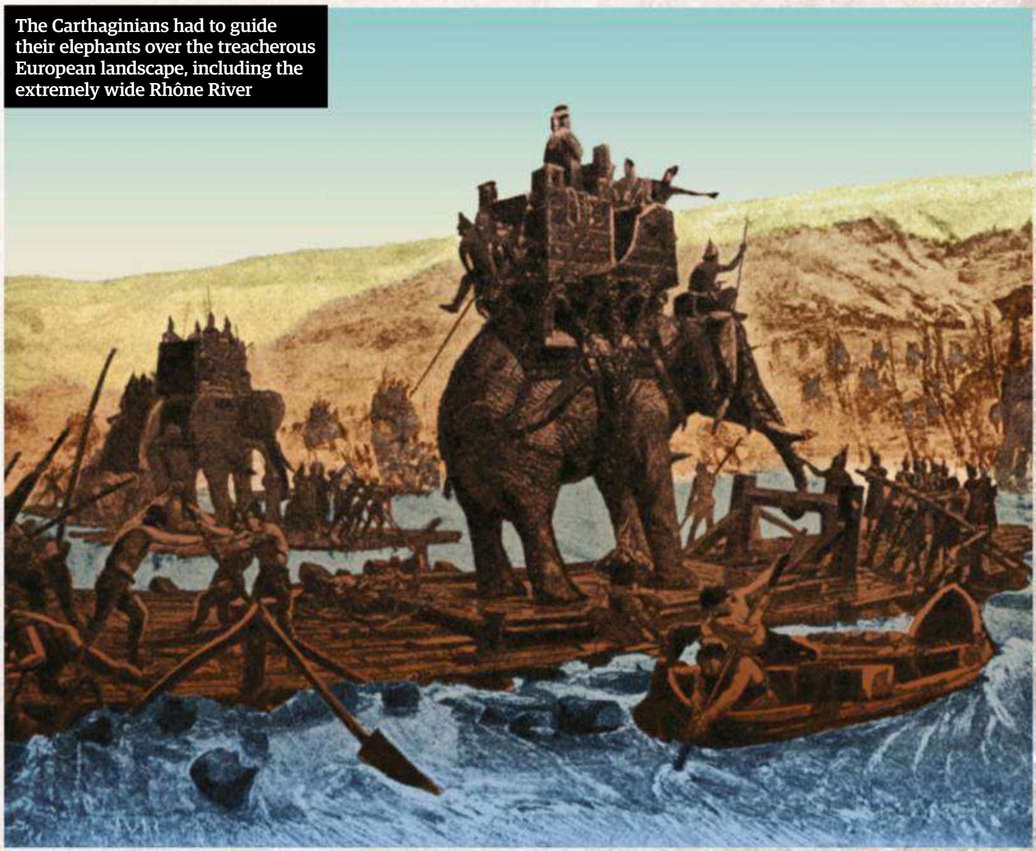
Traversing the Alps cost Hannibal's army dearly. By the time he reached the lowlands on the other side, he had just 12,000 African troops, 8,000 Spaniards, 6,000 cavalry and had just a handful of elephants left. Hannibal had lost over half of his forces simply reaching Italy; what could he possibly achieve against the far more numerous Romans? What followed proved that Hannibal Barca was one of the greatest military minds of all time.

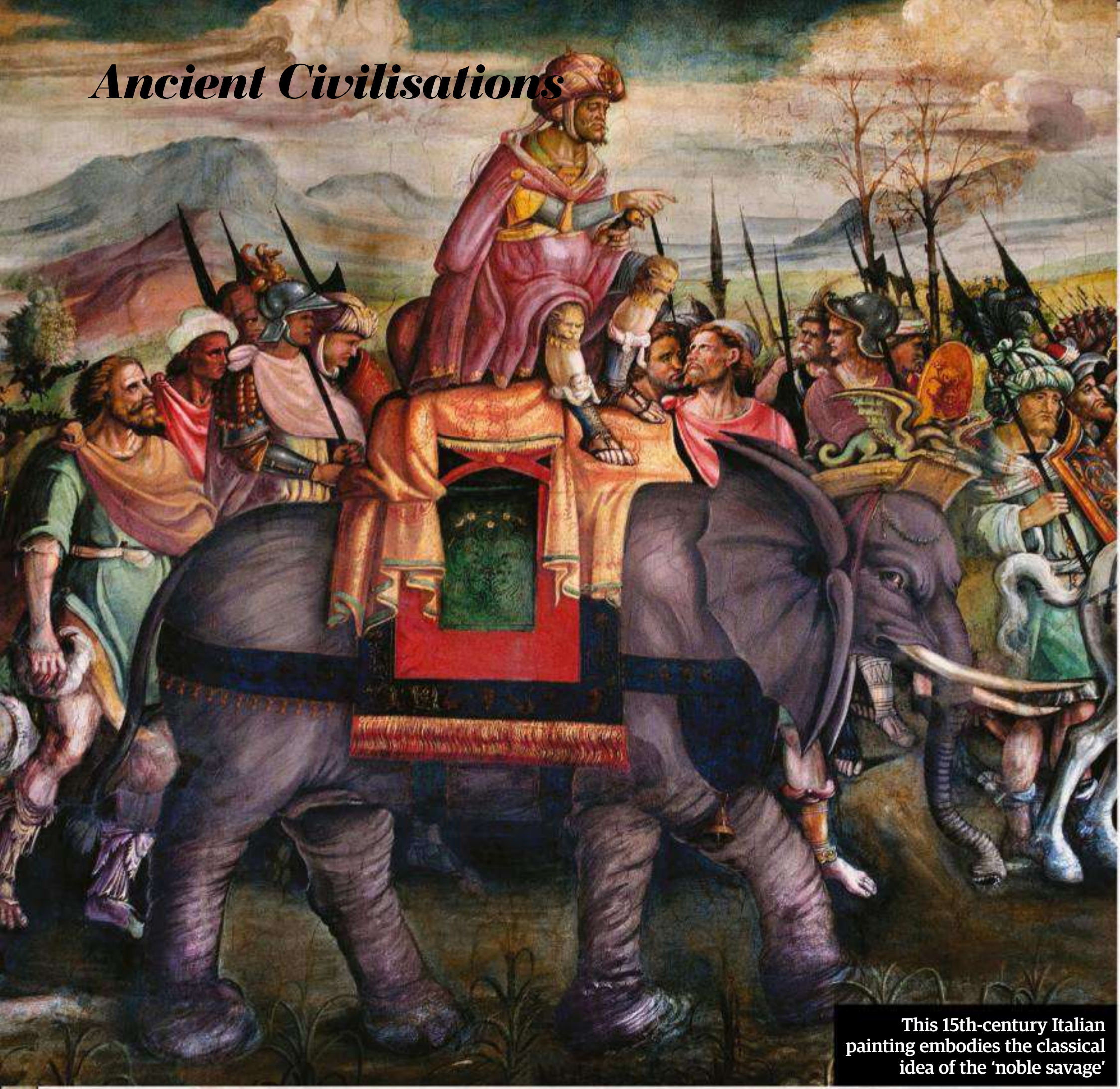
At the Battle of the Trebia in 218 BCE, he pretended to flee before the overeager Romans, who rashly pursued him. Unknown to them, Hannibal had cleverly deployed some 1,000 cavalry and 1,000 infantry under the command of his youngest brother, Mago Barca, in a concealed position behind some marsh reeds. When the Romans passed them, the Carthaginians ambushed. The Romans were taken completely by surprise, and their army of some 40,000 was crushed, with just 10,000 escaping the trap alive.

Worse was to come. In 217 BCE, Hannibal met a Roman army head-on at Lake Trasimene. The battle was, "... savage at every point," wrote the Roman historian Livy. Valour was not enough to turn the tide against the better-led Carthaginian army. Roman general Gaius Flaminius was slain, along with 15,000 of his men, though the Carthaginians lost some 2,500 of their own troops, too. In a bid to win the support of the local people, Hannibal began to free his non-Roman Italian prisoners of war. Stunned and beaten, the Romans began to understand that Hannibal was no ordinary general. They appointed Quintus Fabius Maximus as dictator, a post that carried with it vast powers to be used only in a time of emergency.


Lucius Aemilius Paullus, one of the two consuls sent against Hannibal, lies dying on the field at Cannae


Hannibal accompanied his father, Hamilcar, on campaign from the age of nine


The Carthaginians had to guide their elephants over the treacherous European landscape, including the extremely wide Rhône River



This 15th-century Italian painting embodies the classical idea of the 'noble savage'

Hannibal continued to cause havoc throughout Italy as he marched south. Fabius dogged him at every turn, always refusing outright to battle with the nigh-invincible Hannibal. Instead, Fabius picked off straggling Carthaginians or fought small skirmishes to restore Roman confidence. This strategy brought modest but real results. It also caused dissatisfaction among more aggressive Romans who wanted to take on Hannibal once again. They called Fabius 'cunctator' (meaning 'delayer') for his unwillingness to face the enemy in battle, and despite restoring Roman fortunes, Fabius's six-month dictatorship was not extended.

> "THE ROMANS COULD NOT EJECT HANNIBAL FROM ITALY"

In the following year, a Roman army of unprecedented size - some 80,000 men - met Hannibal in a pitched battle at Cannae in southern Italy. The Romans charged ahead, pushing their way deep into the Carthaginian centre, which seemed to give way. However, this was all part of Hannibal's cunning plan, and as the Romans pressed forward, the wings of his army closed in. Trapped, the Romans became so closely packed that they could not even swing their swords and were slain almost to a man. "Some were discovered lying there alive," Livy wrote, "with thighs and tendons slashed, baring their necks and throats and bidding their conquerors drain the remnant of their blood." About 50,000 Romans died in that single day.

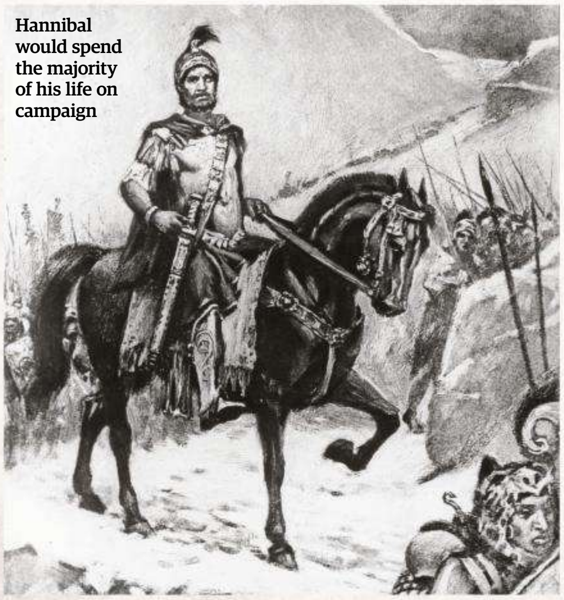
In the aftermath of Cannae, Maharbal, Hannibal's talented cavalry commander, urged him to strike at Rome, promising that they would be having dinner there in just four days if he did so. But Hannibal did not march immediately on Rome. The Carthaginian army was exhausted and he had lost thousands of men. He had defeated three Roman armies, inflicting terrible losses, but the Romans could always raise new legions to replace them. Hannibal, on the other hand, had bled his own army white in winning these battles, and may have been left too weak to contemplate a siege of Rome at this time.

When Hannibal refused to follow his subordinate's advice, a frustrated Maharbal remarked, "You know how to win a battle, Hannibal; you do not know how to use the victory." This decision was one of his most controversial. Rome might well have fallen to the Carthaginians had he appeared outside its gates soon after Cannae. Instead, the Romans found the will to continue the war, and, by and large, Rome's allies stood by them.

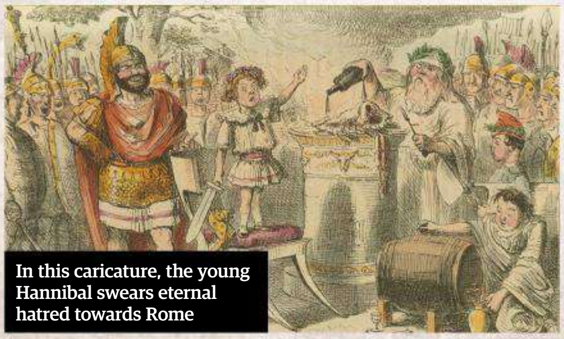
Hannibal would enjoy limited successes in Italy after Cannae. The city of Capua defected to him in 216 BCE and, in 212 BCE, Tarentum joined his cause too. But these were scattered victories and reinforcements from Carthage were very limited. The Romans could not eject Hannibal from his base in southern Italy, but he could not defeat Rome either, and so a stalemate prevailed.

When the war began, the Romans had shrewdly sent an army to Spain to put pressure on the Carthaginians there. Hannibal, in his eagerness to get to grips with the Romans in Italy, had left behind him an incompletely pacified territory, and Rome found willing allies there who wanted the Carthaginians gone. The Romans suffered terrible reverses in Spain, but it also became a training ground for the one Roman general who would prove to be a match for Hannibal in military skill: Publius Cornelius Scipio. With his father and uncle killed, Scipio was just 25 years old when he took command of Roman forces. He was no callow youth, but a battle-hardened survivor of the disaster at Cannae.

After seizing the main Carthaginian stronghold of Carthago Nova in a surprise assault in 209 BCE, Scipio next defeated Hannibal's brother, Hasdrubal Barca, at the Battle of Baecula. This was followed by another victory at the Battle of Ilipa in 206 BCE over Hasdrubal Gisgo and Hannibal's brother Mago. All the while, Scipio strengthened his soldiers and developed the



Hannibal would spend the majority of his life on campaign



In this caricature, the young Hannibal swears eternal hatred towards Rome tactics that would eventually make the Romans more than a match for the mercenaries who fought for Carthage.

While Hannibal was in Italy, unable to do much against a Rome that had largely recovered from its earlier defeats, Scipio was developing into one of the finest generals Rome would ever produce. Mago would quit Spain altogether by 205 BCE, leaving Scipio as the master of the country. The loss of this territory also encouraged Massinissa, a Numidian prince, to switch his loyalty to Rome. Scipio would later have use of the excellent cavalry Massinissa brought with him, and this would go a long way to remedy the Roman weakness in cavalry that had long plagued them in their battles with the Carthaginians.

In 208 BCE, the Carthaginians launched a major bid to bring aid to Hannibal, but this did not come directly from Carthage. Instead, Hannibal's brother, Hasdrubal Barca, escaped Scipio's clutches and marched his army out of Spain. He retraced his brother's footsteps through southern Gaul to Italy, which he reached in 207 BCE. Lying between Hasdrubal and his older brother in the south were the Roman legions. The Romans struck at Hasdrubal before they could join together and smashed his army along the Metaurus River, killing some 10,000 of his Spanish and African mercenaries. Hannibal learned of his younger brother's defeat only when the Romans tossed Hasdrubal's head into his army's camp. "Now, at last," Hannibal said grimly, "I see the destiny of Carthage plain!"

Having driven the Carthaginians from Spain, Scipio was placed in command of a large army in Sicily, which he then took to Africa in 204 BCE for a final showdown with Carthage. After landing, Scipio besieged the city of Utica and then defeated a large Carthaginian army sent against him. Scipio was successful in all his endeavours, and Carthage sued for peace. In 203 BCE, while peace terms were being discussed under truce, Hannibal and his brother Mago, who was now in northern Italy, were recalled home.

It is said that Hannibal was furious when this recall order reached him, and that he complained bitterly that his government had not supported him during the 16 years he had campaigned against the Romans in Italy. However, at the root of it all, Hannibal had only himself to blame. He had incautiously moved against Saguntum years before, bringing on a war with Rome when Carthage was not fully prepared to wage one. He then invaded Italy with an army that was too small to win that war, no matter how many battles he was able to win with it.

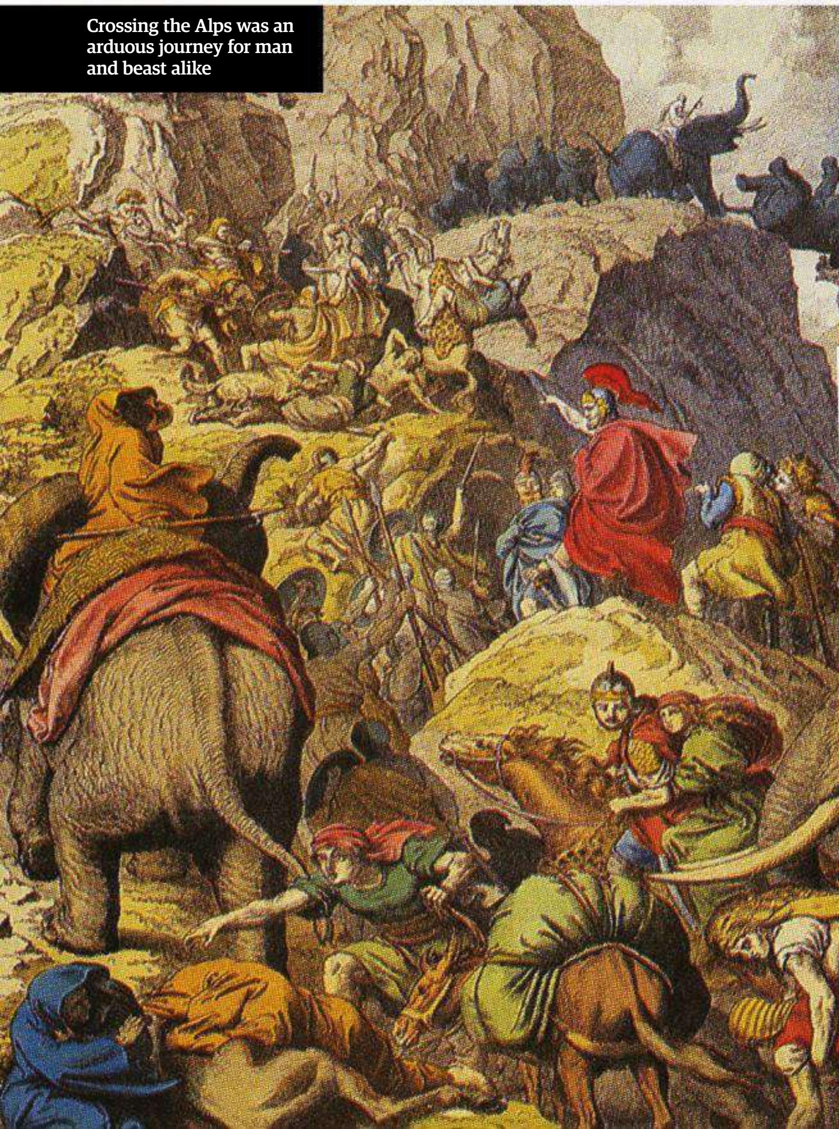
For many years after Cannae, he was unable to do more than hold his own as events unfolded

WHY DIDN'T CARTHAGE DO MORE FOR HANNIBAL?

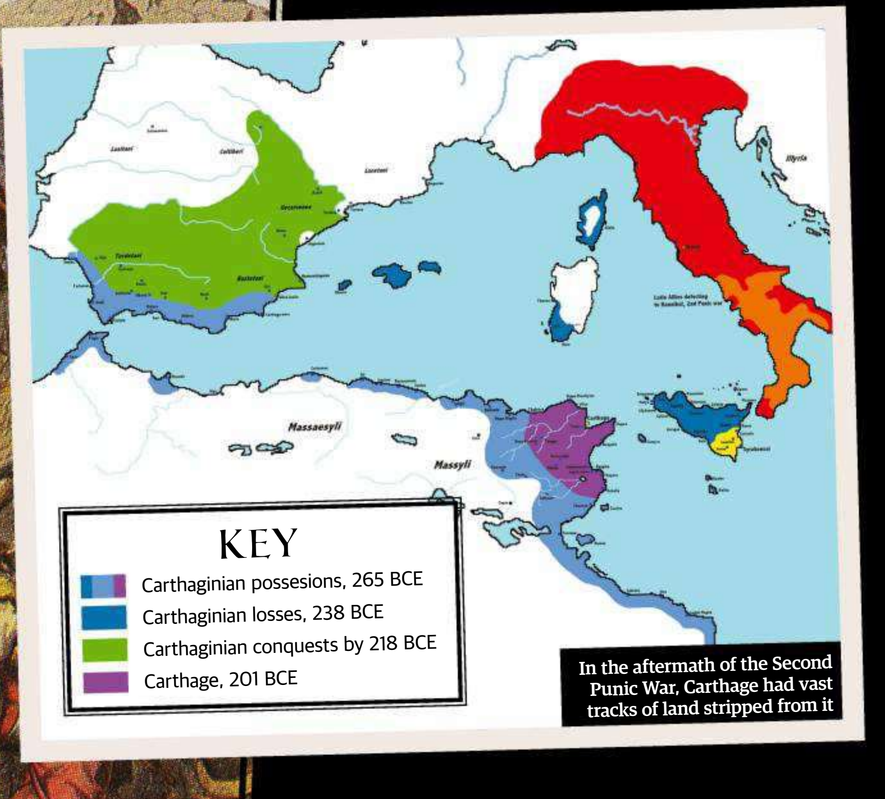
Hannibal's home government in Carthage proved reluctant to send him reinforcements after Cannae. Carthage was not unified behind Hannibal in seeking to fight a war to the death with Rome in Italy, and many leading Carthaginians preferred instead to send newly raised mercenary troops elsewhere, especially to Spain, which was now under attack by Roman legions, and to Sicily, where they hoped to re-establish the positions they had lost after the First Punic War. Hannibal would be reinforced just once following his great victory at Cannae, with a relative handful of troops delivered to him in 215 BCE.

We can discount the notion that Roman sea power prevented Carthage from ever trying to do more for Hannibal. While Rome had the stronger navy, it was not so powerful that it could prevent any and all Punic sea-borne crossings. Successful reinforcement missions were sent to Spain in 215 BCE and 207 BCE. A crossing was also made to Sicily in 213 BCE and then again in 212 BCE. In 205 BCE, Hannibal's brother Mago travelled by sea with his troops from Spain to northern Italy and was himself reinforced by Carthage in 204 BCE. It is clear then that the Carthaginians could have sent reinforcements by sea to Hannibal. They made the conscious decision not to.

Hannibal's political opponents in Carthage noted that despite Hannibal's grand triumphs in Italy, he had failed to detach any of Rome's Latin allies, the foundation of its power, from the Republic. Thus, they argued, Hannibal had gotten no closer to defeating Rome than when he entered Italy in 218 BCE. For the bulk of Carthage's leading citizens, Hannibal was useful in keeping large numbers of Roman soldiers busy in Italy after Cannae while the more important contests for Spain, Sicily, Corsica and Sardinia played themselves out.



Crossing the Alps was an arduous journey for man and beast alike


Lusitani
Celtiberi
Turdetani
Bastetani
Illyria
Massaesyli
Massyli
KEY
Carthaginian possesions, 265 BCE
Carthaginian losses, 238 BCE
Carthaginian conquests by 218 BCE
Carthage, 201 BCE

In the aftermath of the Second Punic War, Carthage had vast tracks of land stripped from it

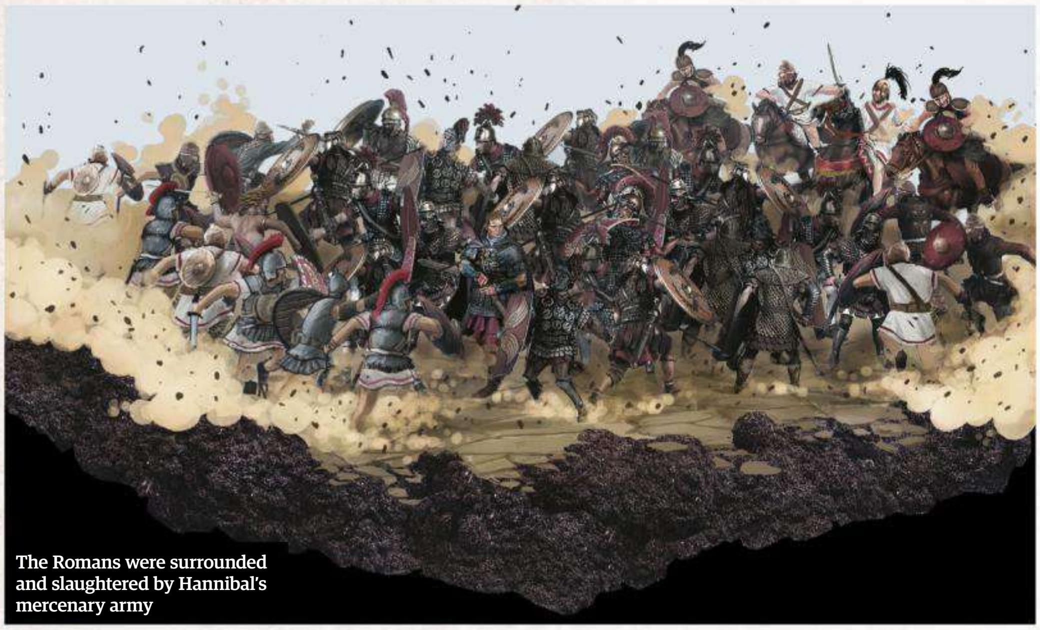
ROME'S DARKEST DAY

The Battle of Cannae was one of the worst disasters that ever befell a Roman army. Often aggressive to a fault, the Romans were, for a time at least, chastened by the thrashings they had received at the hands of the wily Hannibal Barca and his army at the Trebia river and at Lake Trasimene. Shocked by the scale of their defeats, they followed the cautious military policy of the dictator Quintus Fabius Maximus. After a while, however, they could no longer abide the Carthaginian general pillaging his way through Italy virtually unchallenged. They insisted on once again confronting Hannibal in a pitched battle.

In 216 BCE, the Romans elected consuls who would seek to bring Hannibal to account. These were Lucius Aemilius Paullus and his colleague, Gaius Terentius Varro. In all, their army numbered about 80,000 men. This giant muster marched on Hannibal in Apulia in south-eastern Italy, finding him at Cannae in late July 216 BCE. The Romans made matters more difficult for themselves by alternating command of their army between the two consuls. Paullus would have command of it on one day, and Varro the next, and so on. On the day of battle, 2 August 216 BCE, overall command rested in the hands of Varro.

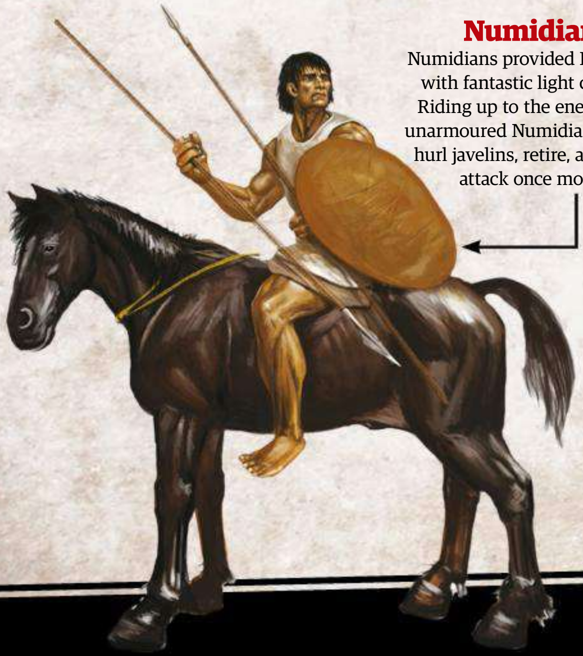
Roman battle tactics of the period were very simple – essentially a straightforward rush at the enemy intended to overwhelm him by brute force alone. The Roman legionary was a highly skilled and very efficient killer, fighting as heavy infantry in several ranks. In contrast, the Carthaginian army at Cannae was a heterogeneous mix of troops from all over the Mediterranean world. It was perhaps Hannibal's greatest talent to weld such men into a cohesive, successful fighting force. He made good use of the varied troops at his disposal. Knowing that the Gauls and Spaniards that were on foot in the centre of his line would likely be pushed back by the Roman infantry charge, he positioned them well forward of his wings, in an effort to use the Romans' own power against them. During their charge, the legionaries drove the Gallic and Spanish warriors backwards, and succeeded in punching their way through, only to find that by doing so, they had helped to encircle themselves. When the gore-drenched day of 2 August came to an end, close to 50,000 Romans lay dead on the battlefield.

> "THE ROMAN LEGIONARY WAS A HIGHLY SKILLED AND VERY EFFICIENT KILLER"



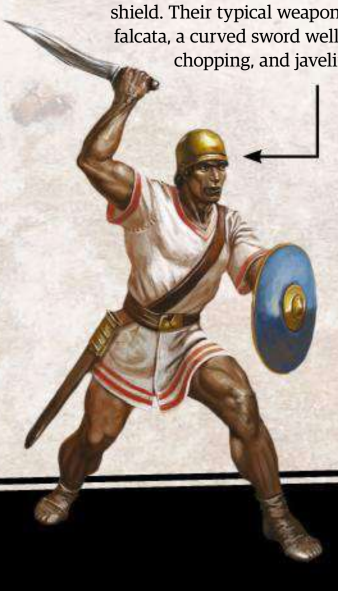
The Romans were surrounded and slaughtered by Hannibal's mercenary army

HANNIBAL'S MERCENARIES



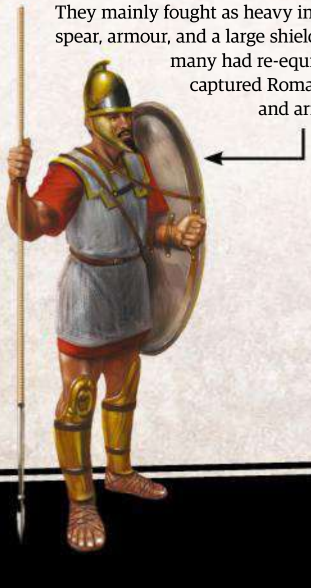
Numidian

Numidians provided Hannibal with fantastic light cavalry. Riding up to the enemy, the unarmoured Numidians would hurl javelins, retire, and then attack once more.



Iberian (Spaniard)

Iberian Spanish infantry wore white tunics and carried a small round shield. Their typical weapons were the falcata, a curved sword well suited for chopping, and javelins.



Libyphoenician

The Libyphoenicians from North Africa spoke Punic but were not Carthaginian citizens. They mainly fought as heavy infantry with a spear, armour, and a large shield. By Cannae, many had re-equipped with captured Roman weapons and armour.

The battle begins

Hasdrubal's cavalry drives off the Roman horse on the Roman right wing. Meanwhile, Maharbal's Numidians battle the Italian allied cavalry on the Roman left. As the lines of infantry close, they hurl their javelins at each other. The fighting becomes hand-to-hand and both sides fight fiercely. The Romans begin to push the Gauls and Spaniards backward.

The Romans advance

Numbering some 80,000 men, the Romans under their consuls Gaius Terentius Varro and Lucius Aemilius Paullus approach the Carthaginians confidently, intending to smash through them. Varro is on the Roman left with the Italian allied cavalry, while Paullus is on the right with the Roman cavalry.

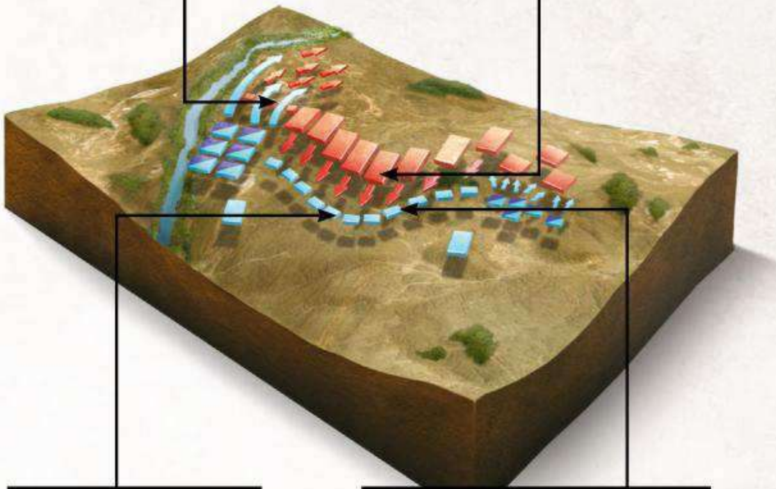
Surrounded

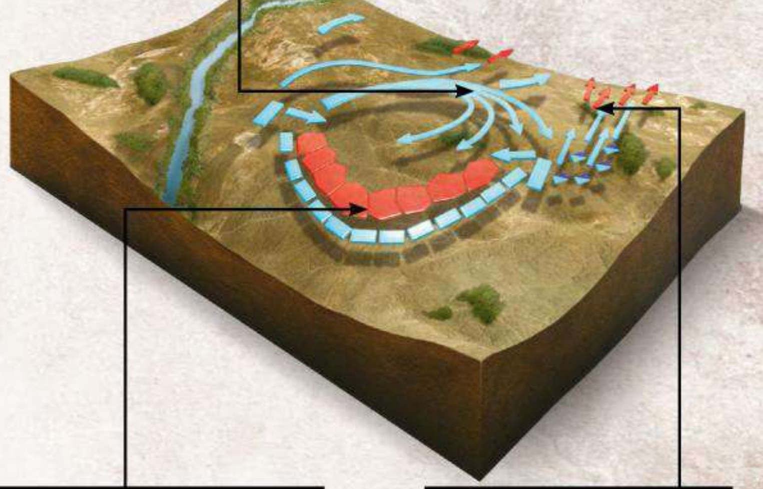
Hasdrubal's horsemen on the Carthaginian left reform, wheel around and attack the Italian allied cavalry under Varro in the rear, who flee for their lives, pursued by the Numidians. Hasdrubal next descends on the rear of the Roman infantry. The Romans find themselves totally surrounded by their enemies.

KEY

🟦 Carthaginian army

🟥 Roman army





Hannibal and his captains

Hannibal and his brother Mago are in the centre with the Gallic and Spanish foot. Hasdrubal is in command of the Gallic and Spanish heavy cavalry on the Punic left wing, while Maharbal leads the Numidian light cavalry on the right.

The Carthaginian line

Hannibal forms his outnumbered army of 40,000 infantry and 10,000 cavalry into a convex line. The Carthaginian centre is advanced ahead of the wings, with the left wing touching the Aufidus river. Hannibal has strong cavalry forces deployed on both flanks, with his Gallic and Spanish infantry between them. His African infantrymen are held in reserve.

A Roman breakthrough?

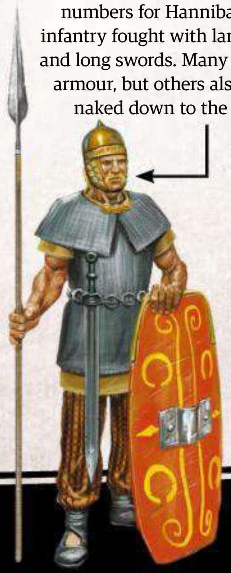
The infantry battle seems to be going the Romans' way as their legionaries drive the enemy before them, and finally achieve a breakthrough. Then, Hannibal's African infantry turn inward and strike the tired and disordered legionaries in both flanks. The Gauls and Spaniards themselves reform and get back into the fight.

Slaughter

A massacre ensues as the Punic noose tightens around the doomed Romans. Some legionaries cannot even swing their swords as they are bunched so tightly together. Consul Paullus is slain and, by the end of a day of brutal slaughter, about 50,000 Romans lie dead, along with some 8,000 Carthaginian troops.

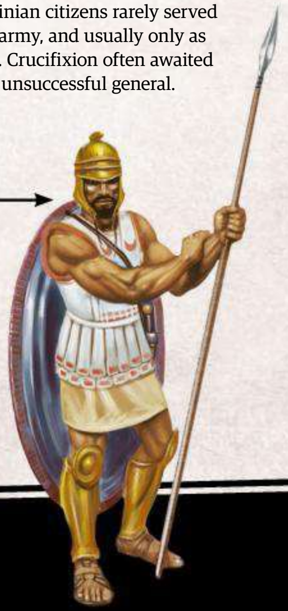
Gaul

Gallic tribesmen fought in large numbers for Hannibal. Their infantry fought with large shields and long swords. Many wore mail armour, but others also fought naked down to the waist.



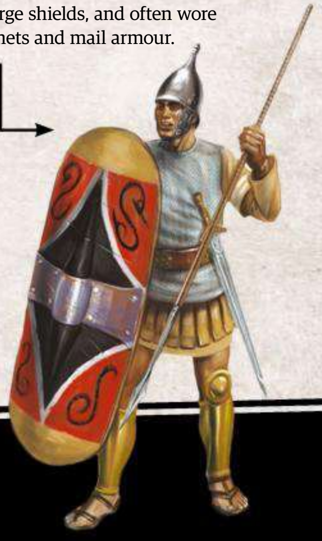
Carthaginian

Carthaginian citizens rarely served in the army, and usually only as officers. Crucifixion often awaited an unsuccessful general.



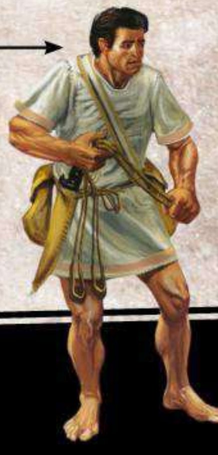
Celtiberian (Spaniard)

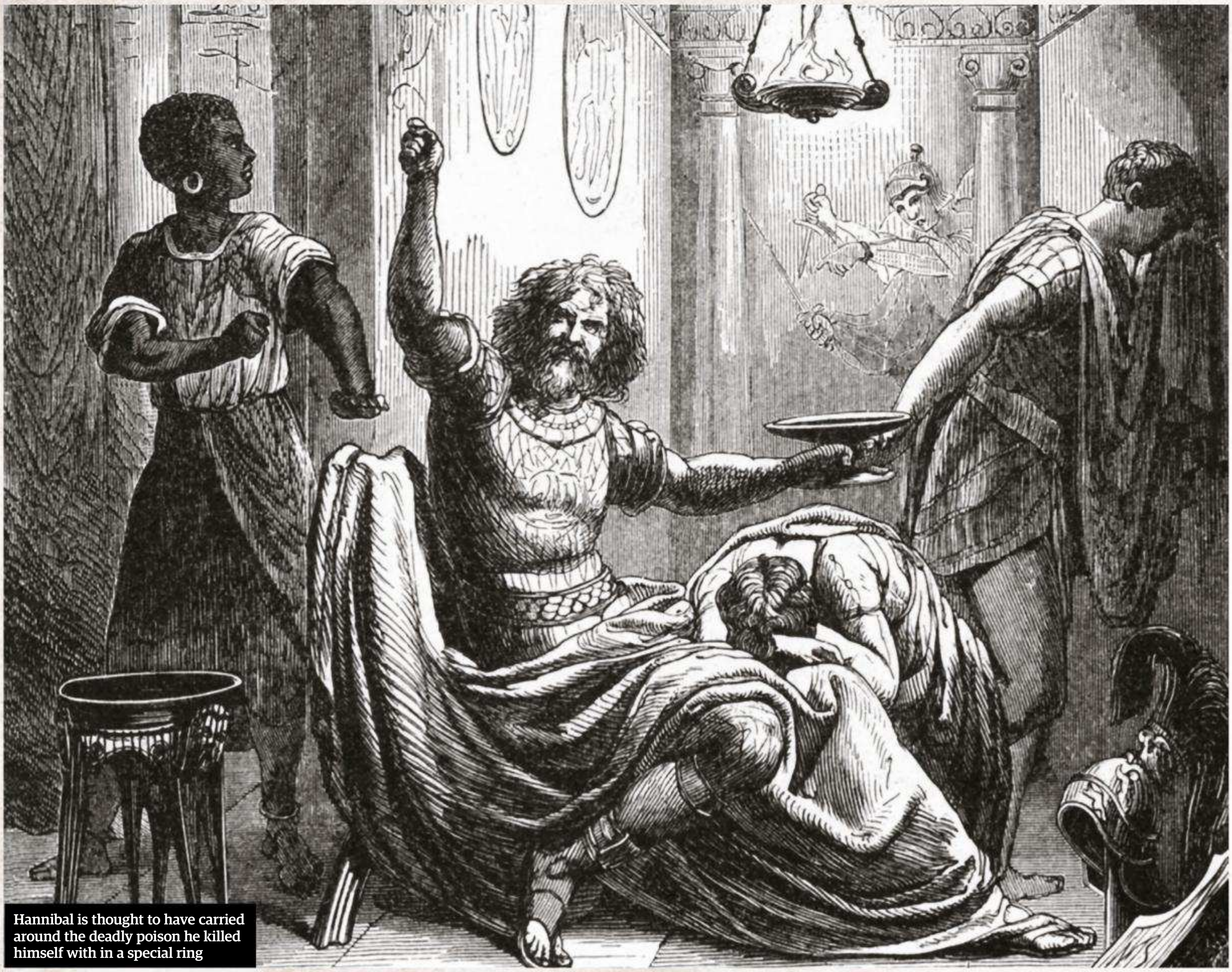
A fusion of Celtic newcomers with the native Spanish, the Celtiberians commonly wielded straight swords, carried large shields, and often wore helmets and mail armour.



Balearic Islander

The unarmoured slingers from the Balearic Isles (Majorca and Minorca) in Hannibal's army each carried three slings of varying lengths for use at differing ranges.





Hannibal is thought to have carried around the deadly poison he killed himself with in a special ring

© Alamy, Shutterstock, Getty Images, Sol90 Images

elsewhere, such as in Sicily and Spain. The city of Syracuse, which fell to Carthage in 215 BCE, was captured three years later in 212 BCE, and Spain was entirely in Roman hands by 205 BCE.

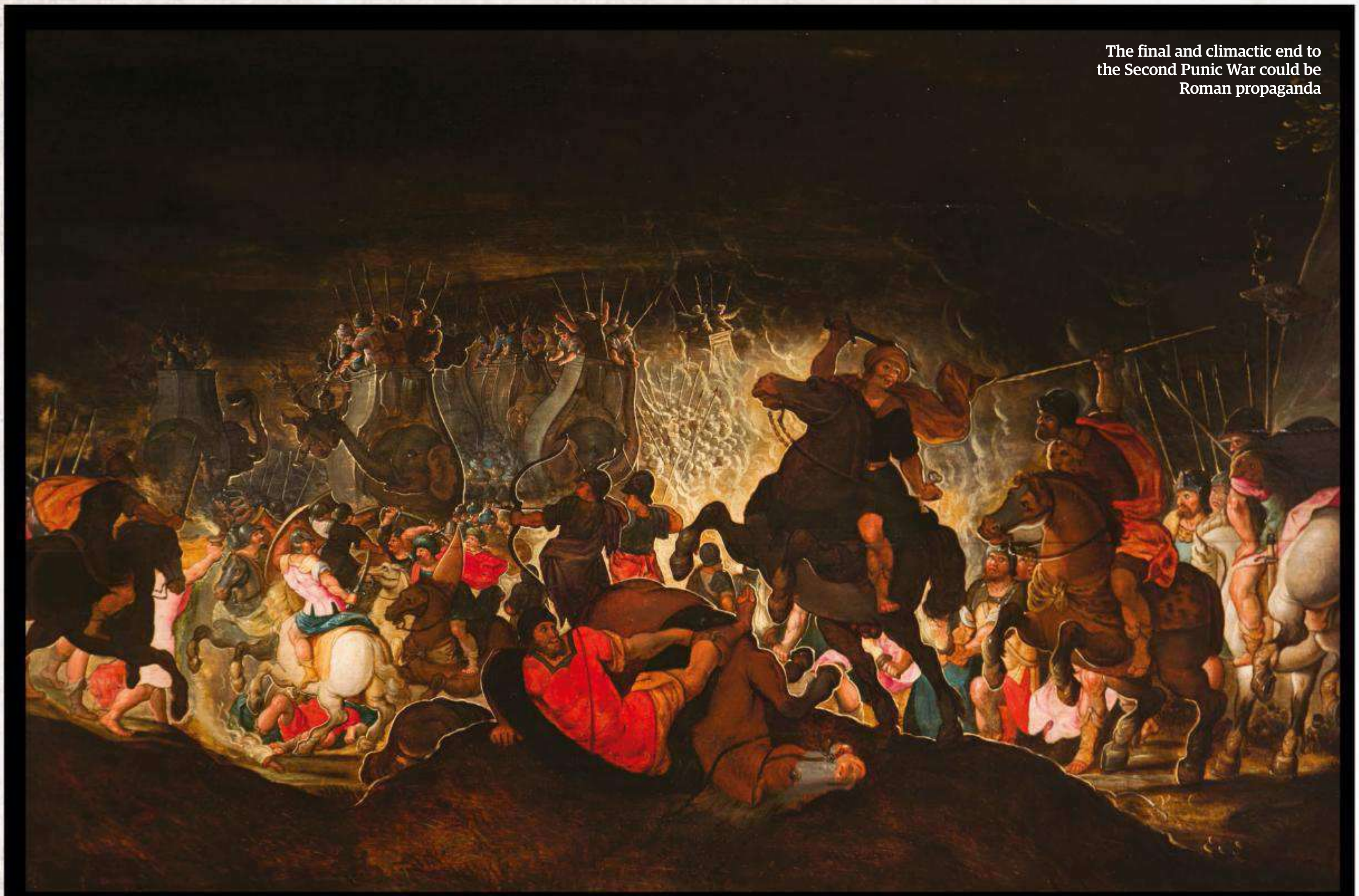
Capua was retaken by the Romans in 211 BCE, as was Tarentum in 209 BCE. Over time, Hannibal's army deteriorated, while the Romans fielded ever more legions that they used to hold him at bay in southern Italy. With eventual Roman victory looking ever more certain, Hannibal's allies in Italy began to desert him. Hannibal was forced to make his last refuge in Bruttium, in the toe of Italy, where he remained until his recall.

With Hannibal back in Africa (Mago would die at sea from his wounds while on his way home) the Carthaginian government regained a measure of confidence, and peace negotiations with Rome broke down. War resumed, and Hannibal was put in command of Carthage's remaining troops. With an army of about 40,000, comprising his best troops rescued and restored from Italy and whatever else he could scrape together, including a handful of war elephants, Hannibal met Scipio in battle at Zama in 202 BCE in modern Tunisia. Alarmingly, he was weaker in cavalry than Scipio, who had the assistance of 4,000 of Massinissa's fine Numidian mounted warriors.

In the hard-fought battle that followed, the Romans had the better of the Carthaginians. Roman tactics had vastly improved after years of war and were no longer simplistic headlong rushes at the enemy. Scipio's men deftly stepped aside as Hannibal's elephants thundered through their lines, and then surrounded and slew the beasts. Hannibal's troops wavered and then cracked when the Roman and allied Numidian cavalry swung around and attacked them in their rear. The Carthaginian army crumbled, and Hannibal was forced to flee the field in order to survive.

The Carthaginian government again sued for peace, and in 201 BCE, the long war that had begun 17 years earlier officially came to an end. Subsequently Hannibal did much to restore Carthaginian finances to better pay the huge indemnity the Romans placed on them. Roman connivance with anti-Barcid factions in Carthage saw him driven out of the city, but Hannibal would never give up the struggle against Rome. In 191 BCE, he was commanding fleets against the Romans on behalf of King Antiochus the Great of the Seleucid Empire.

After Rome's eventual triumph over the Seleucids, Hannibal made his way to the kingdom of Bithynia in Asia Minor. Roman vengeance found him there, and they pressured its king to extradite him to Rome. King Prusias agreed to do so, and in c.183 BCE, he sent his soldiers to Hannibal's house to place him under arrest. Knowing well what fate was in store for him if he fell into Roman hands, Hannibal poisoned himself. One of the greatest generals of antiquity lay dead by his own hand.



The final and climactic end to the Second Punic War could be Roman propaganda

ZAMA: THE BATTLE THAT NEVER WAS?

Professor Yozan Mosig explains why there's so much doubt surrounding the event

WHAT DON'T WE KNOW ABOUT ZAMA?

No one has been able to find the exact location of the battle. The village of Jama, close to Siliana, some 150 kilometres southwest of Tunis, and a number of other candidates have been suggested but without archaeological verification. The site remains unknown, while those of practically all other major battles waged during the Second Punic War are reasonably well established. This is particularly troublesome in view of the Romans' penchant for erecting monuments in situ to commemorate their greatest victories – there is not even a lonely column, statue or ruin marking the place.

ARE THERE DISTORTIONS ABOUT THE BATTLE OF ZAMA IN THE HISTORICAL RECORD THAT NEED CORRECTING?

The classical accounts of the Battle of Zama are strangely inconsistent and contradictory. The course of the struggle is unimaginative to the point of being suspect as the alleged outcome of a first-rate military mind such as Hannibal's and even Scipio's. It reads more like the invention of a writer lacking the vision of a great general. The 80 elephants are not credible, in view of their lack at the preceding battles of Utica and the Great Plains.

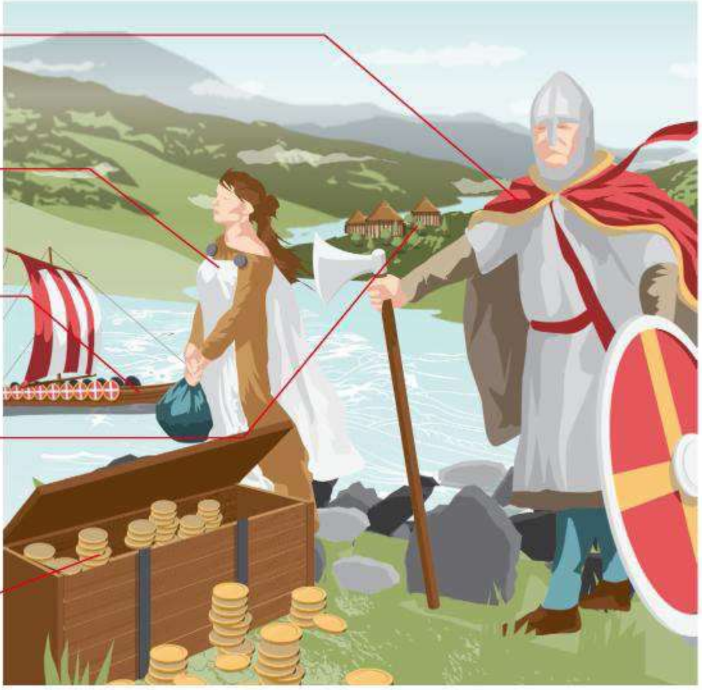
The recent dating of the famed military Punic port of Carthage to the 2nd rather than the 3rd century BCE has created a paradox leading to further doubts. According to HR Hurst, in his *Excavations At Carthage*, the port was built at some point between 201 and 146 BCE, after the end of the war. As Abdelaziz Belkhodja argues in his book, *Hannibal Barca: L'histoire Veritable Et Le Mensonge De Zama* (2014), this casts serious doubts on the authenticity of the peace treaty that Carthage was required to sign after the alleged defeat at Zama. The treaty, which dates back to 201 BCE, limited the Carthaginian navy to no more than ten warships, but the port had berths for 220, which means that at least that provision of the treaty is fictitious. If the war ended with a peace agreement giving concessions to Rome and without the dissolution of the Punic navy, as proposed by Hannibal in his meeting with Scipio, no final battle was needed. The construction of the military port after the war would then make sense, as would the lack of a monument to mark the location of the fictitious battle. It is therefore possible that the Battle of Zama was a fabrication of Roman propaganda to heal their wounded pride from Hannibal's undefeated years in Italy, and especially their defeat at Cannae, which necessitated creating the illusion of having achieved a comparable victory.

> "HANNIBAL WOULD NEVER GIVE UP THE STRUGGLE AGAINST ROME"

How to BUILD A VIKING SETTLEMENT

THESE FIERCE NORTHMEN WERE SKILLED SETTLERS AS WELL AS WARRIORS EUROPE, 8-11TH CENTURY

The Viking Age was a time of great upheaval in Medieval Europe. Raiders from the North threatened to overwhelm parts of England and France, with attacks reaching as far as the Mediterranean. Although the Vikings had primarily come to plunder, they also looked to settle in these new lands that provided them with fertile soil for their crops. Well-known cities like Dublin, York and Reykjavík were founded by Vikings and began life as small settlements, expanding over time to become thriving communities and centres of trade and commerce throughout the region.



Military force

To make your mark on the new land you will need a large force, around 60 longships should do.

Slaves

Slavery will only start to diminish in the British Isles after 1066 and is very lucrative for the Vikings.

Longboat

The backbone of your expeditionary force, a longboat's ability to travel inland via rivers will be extremely useful.

Farming

Farmland in Scandinavia is often of poorer quality than that found in the rest of Europe. Make sure to plant to harvest crops to feed your people.

Bribery

Native chiefs take to paying off Viking war-bands to avoid violence; the money will come in useful when it comes to building a new town.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED...

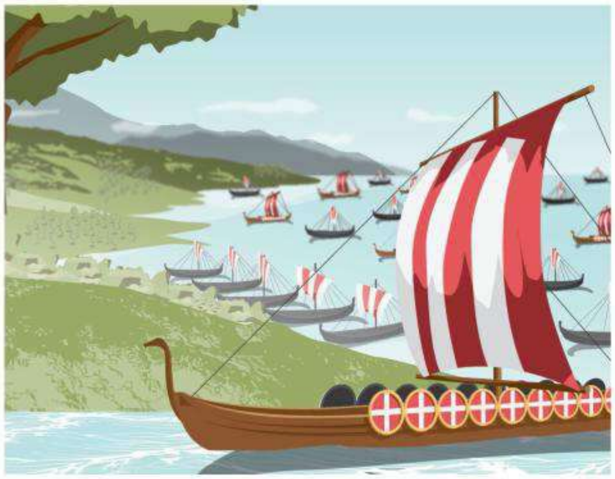
ARMY

SUITABLE LOCATION

TRADING COMMODITIES

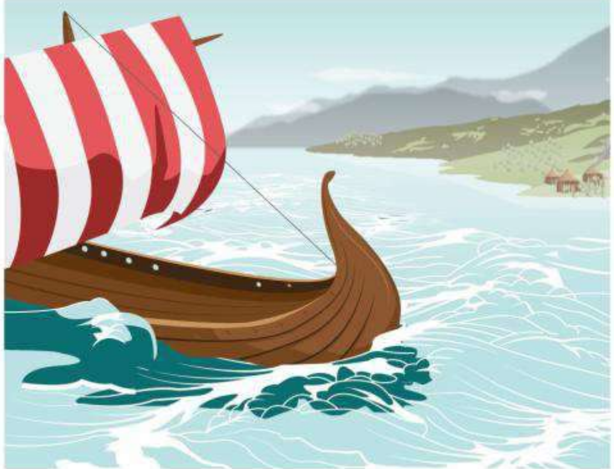
LONGSHIPS

FAMILY



01 Assemble your army

Founding a settlement in a foreign country is going to take a lot of manpower. The larger the fleet you can gather, the more men you have to take and secure the settlement. Having your ships nearby also gives you access to water-bound trade and raw materials, should you need to use them for construction.



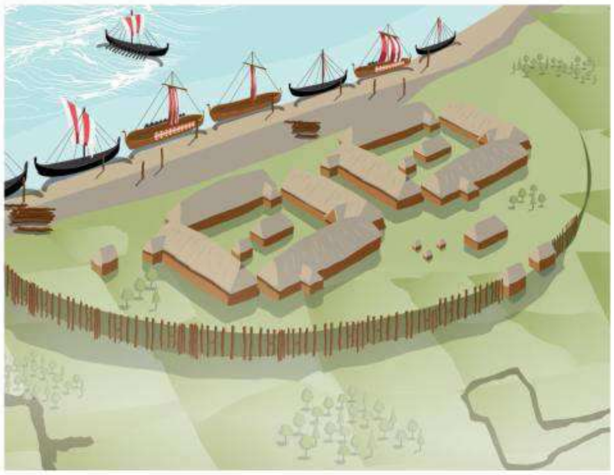
02 Scouting your location

Some locations are better than others, so to assess whether a region is worth occupying, it is a good idea to raid along the coast and scout the lie of the land. As some settlements began as base camps to raid further inland, try looking for locations that have been settled for many years; an old Roman town would be ideal.

How not to… found a settlement

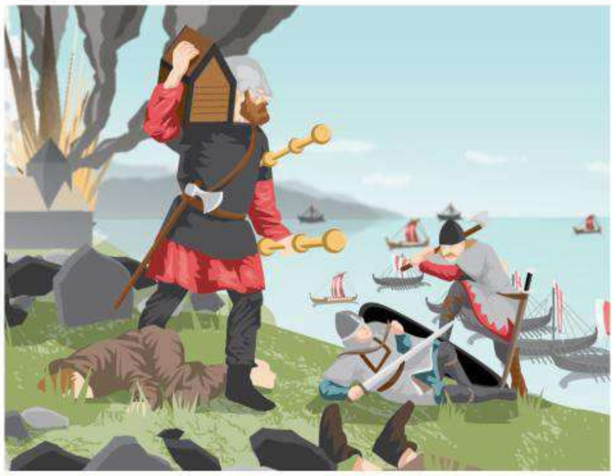
In the 18th century, empire building was in full swing. Major world powers were jostling for control and influence in places like the New World, trying to stamp their authority on unspoiled land. Scotland, being a small country cut off geographically from the rest of Europe, decided that it too would found a colony and become a world player. Panama was chosen as the location and the settlement was to offer an overland route between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. The colony, called Caledonia, was doomed from the start, beset by poor planning and bickering leaders. Many economic factors sealed its fate but the killing blow would be a Spanish siege which saw the settlement abandoned by 1700. An estimated 25 per cent of the country's income was tied up in the Darien Scheme, and its failure was seen as a major factor in the Acts of Union of 1707, when Scotland ceased to be an independent nation.

ISTHMUS OF DARIEN
Sambala's
Ilands
BAY OF
Kings or Auatram
Pearl Id.
Vallona or Gulph of St. Michael



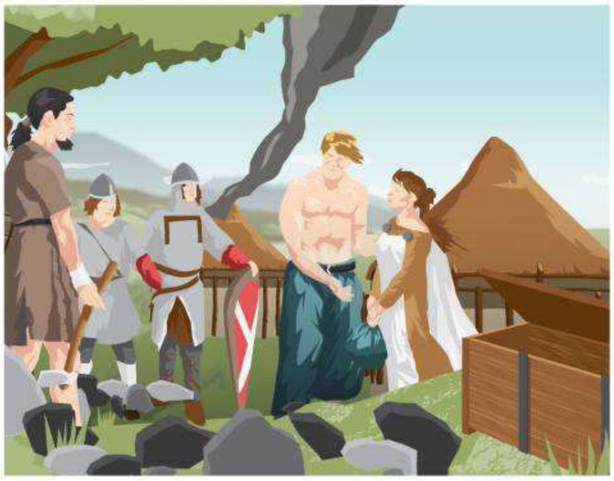
03 Lay the foundations

To settle land you'll need to establish a more permanent base at the coast. Building a longphort, or 'ship camp' is a good place to start. By dragging your ships ashore and using them to build outer defences for a camp, you can create a base camp for further raiding or to act as a kernel for a more permanent settlement.



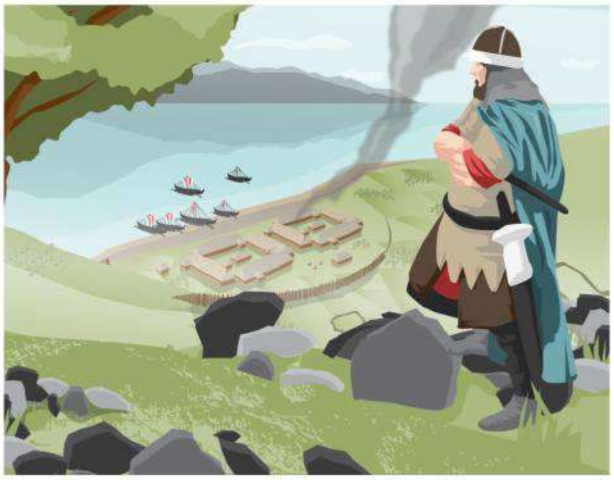
04 Raid, raid, raid

It's probably no shock that the local population isn't going to take very kindly to you and your people's intrusion, so organising some raids to harry and harass them is a good idea. Churches can offer wealth and riches, whereas farmland can take care of sustenance while your own crops start to take root.



05 Prosper

The lifeblood for a settlement is trade, and you should ensure your town becomes central to the region. While furs, wool and other commodities are available, a less salubrious business in the form of slaving offers better returns. These networks stretch all over Europe and reach as far as the Eastern Roman Empire.



06 Survive

With the settlement founded and making money, the last task is to ensure your new home's survival. In this turbulent and violent time, founding a royal dynasty can help to ease the succession of future rulers. You must always be ready to fight for your new home, as rival factions or bands of native warriors are always looking to take what they can.

4 FAMOUS… VIKING SETTLEMENTS

DUBLIN

IRELAND, 841

Founded as a Viking camp in 841, Dublin grew to become a major Irish settlement, with a reputation for a large slave market.

YORK

ENGLAND, 9TH CENTURY

One of the most famous Viking settlements, it is thought York may have been settled since the Mesolithic era.

HEDEBY

GERMANY, 8TH CENTURY

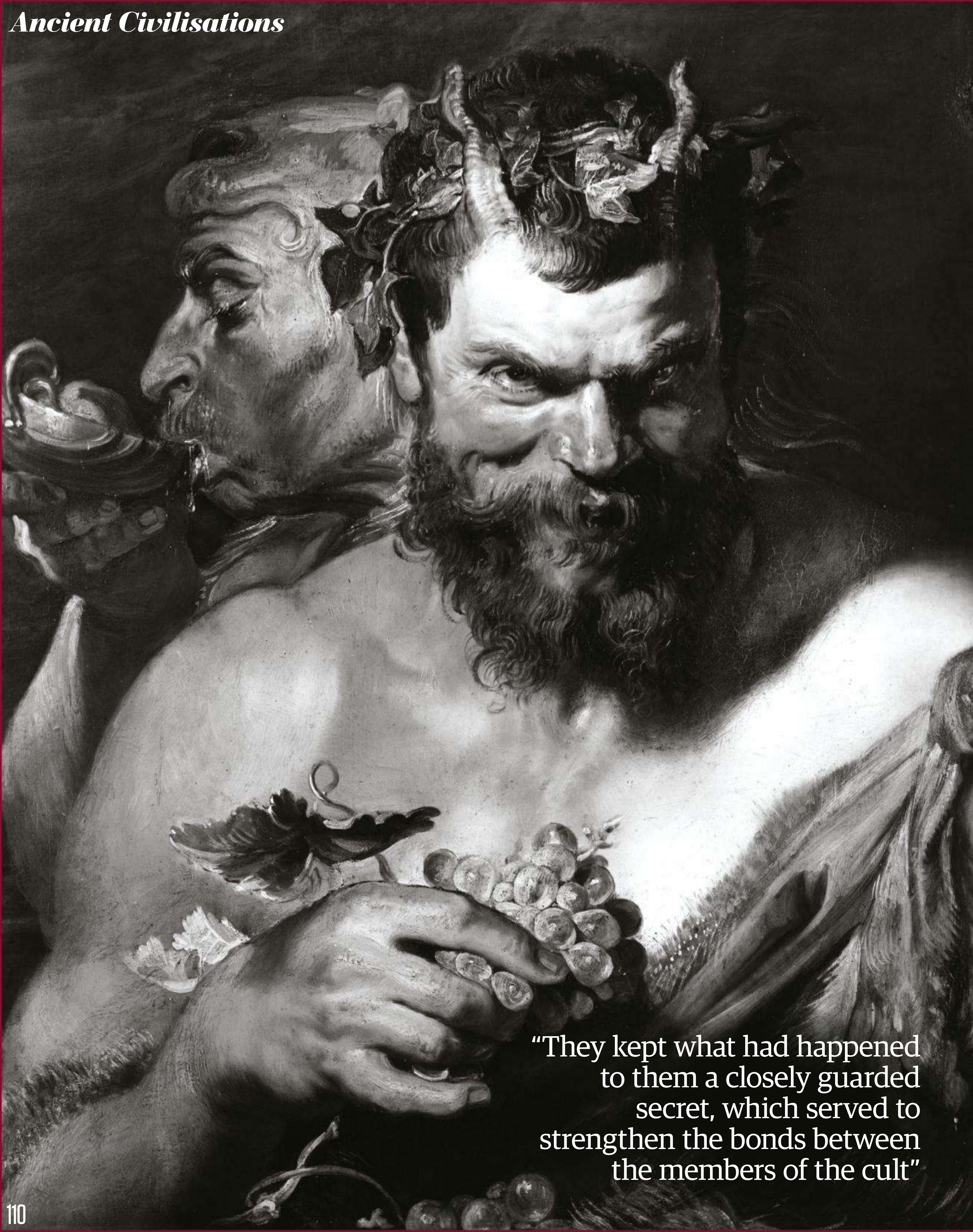
A town built at a vital trade nexus; Hedeby became the centre of commerce in the region until it was abandoned after 1066.

REYKJAVIK

ICELAND, C.870

Originally founded by Norwegians, Reykjavik was a small farming town that became the centre for Icelandic nationalism.

© Ed Crooks, Alamy



“They kept what had happened to them a closely guarded secret, which served to strengthen the bonds between the members of the cult”

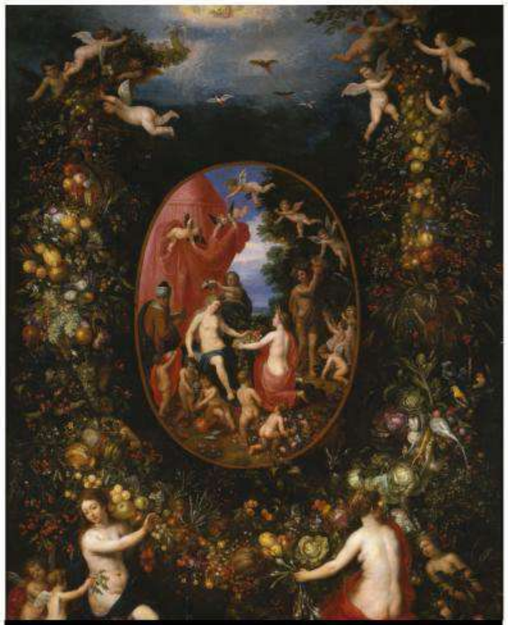
ROMAN MYSTERY CULTS

Uncover the secret rites and bizarre rituals of the Roman spiritual underworld

Much of Roman religion was public in nature. It was all-important to the residents of the city to maintain Rome's good relationship with the gods, and this was done through regular sacrifices and the maintenance of myriad temples dedicated to them. But behind closed doors, those seeking more intimate contact with the divine threw raucous parties, committed gruesome self-mutilation and performed ritual re-enactments. Known as 'mystery cults', these highly secretive societies spread through the Roman world from the East and became extremely popular.

These societies were dedicated to various gods and typically promised their devotees a happy afterlife. Mystery cults allowed the individual to participate directly in the worship service, and the ceremonies often involved ecstatic dancing and singing. These experiences were intended to be transformative, and differed greatly from the more staid rituals of public religion.

One of the earliest cults to come to Rome was that of the Magna Mater, the Great Mother. In 204 BCE, during the dark days of the war with Carthage, the Romans became aware of a prophecy they believed was the key to defeating the enemy. They had to seek out the Great Mother's cult-image and bring this to Rome from Ida, in the kingdom of Pergamum. Her symbol was a sacred stone, which they brought back to Rome, beginning a long tradition of her worship there. Other borrowings from the East included that of Mithras from Persia. Though Persia had long been an enemy of Rome, Mithras became a popular deity among the Romans, especially with soldiers, officials and merchants of the empire.



In this 17th-century painting, the Magna Mater is being fed by allegorical depictions of the seasons

From Egypt in the 2nd century BCE came the cult of the mother goddess Isis, who became beloved across the Roman world, and from the Greeks, the Romans learned of Dionysus, whom they called Bacchus – the god of agriculture and wine. Perhaps unsurprisingly, this mystery cult's ecstatic rites included drinking and dancing, liberating its members and inducing a trance-like state. Another celebrated cult was the Eleusinian Mysteries, which were held at Eleusis in Greece every autumn and had as their foundation the mythological abduction and recovery by Demeter, goddess of agriculture, of her daughter, Persephone. Before the religious revelry could begin, however, members of the mystery cults had to be initiated.

INITIATION

At the heart of each Roman mystery religion was the mysterium, a closely kept secret rite or point of theology. To gain knowledge of this 'mystery', a person had to undergo the process of initiation. This was entirely voluntary; no one was compelled to join a mystery cult or take part in its ceremonies. The purpose of the initiation ritual was to bring the individual, the initiate, into direct contact with a deity through an intense and unforgettable experience. This ecstatic experience was not meant to be explained, but felt. Afterwards, they kept what had happened to them a closely guarded secret, which served to strengthen the bonds between the members of the cult.

Initiation into the Bacchanalia, the cult of Bacchus, involved joining a group of Bacchic worshipers and dancing with them in the mountains. Most of these were women, called Bacchants. Some might also have private initiation, and in this case an initiate could be forced to abstain from food for ten days. Then came a period of feasting, after which they would ritually bathe as a form of purification. Only then were they allowed to enter into a shrine of Bacchus.

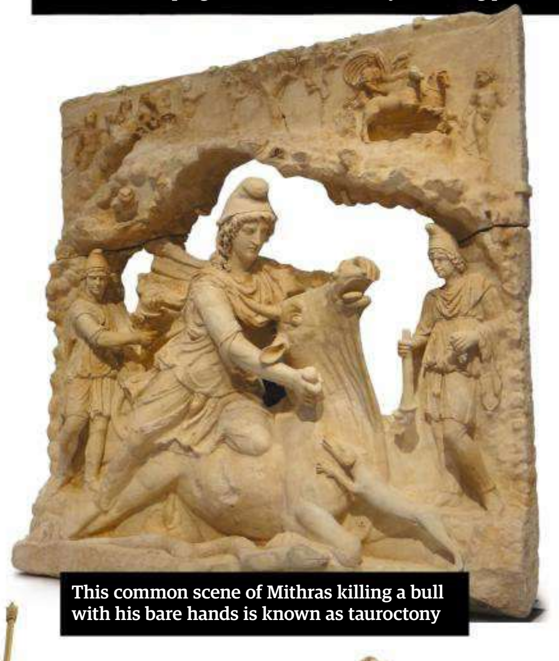
For the followers of Isis, known as the Lady of the Mysteries, the initiation ritual was similar to that of Bacchus. Her initiates bathed, and thus purified, and abstained from food for ten days before embarking on several days of feasting. The wearing of ceremonial robes also featured in the initiation, as well as the viewing of sacred hieroglyphs. The promise of life after death was part of the attraction of this benevolent goddess.

For those who wished to take part in the Eleusinian Mysteries, which continued on in Greece throughout the Roman imperial period, an initiate was made to take part in the so-called Lesser Mysteries that were held each spring in Athens, which was nearby to Eleusis. This initiation process involved sacrifices, ritual purification, fasting and the singing of hymns.

The Great Mother was a figure representing the elemental feminine in its fertility aspect. Magna Mater's male priests, the Galli, were eunuchs, and castrated themselves to be initiated into her priesthood. This extreme act was inspired by the myth that her lover, the god Attis, had done the same. Unlike the other mystery cults, Mithraism accepted only men into its mysteries.

There were seven grades of Mithras's cult, and each of the seven corresponded to one of the known planets of the day. Each grade also had its own rites of initiation. In one, the naked and blindfolded initiate, his hands tied behind him, was made to kneel. Two other men stood beside him as part of the ceremony. A sword was pointed at him, and then he was made to lie prone on the floor. He then had to wear a crown, and lie flat on the ground. Another initiation ritual involved shooting an arrow, thereby re-enacting a story from the life of Mithras in which the god launched an arrow into a rock, causing water to flow from it.

The Bacchus (Dionysian) Mysteries caused scandal in Rome, but this did not stop figures like Mark Antony becoming patrons



This common scene of Mithras killing a bull with his bare hands is known as tauroctony

RITES

The cult of the Magna Mater, the Great Mother, was popular all over the ancient world, and she was known by many names, including Rhea, Demeter, and especially Cybele, the great goddess of Phrygia, whose cult image the Romans brought to Rome. She was the mother of not just all of the gods, but of all humanity, too. Her rites in Rome maintained the link between the goddess and her original homeland in Asia Minor. Her sanctuary, set on the Vatican Hill, was known as the Phrygianum, and the leader of her cult was known as the Phrygian High Priest. There was an annual festival in Rome held in her honour, which ran for seven days and included races in the circus. Rites included dancing and music, with the playing of flutes, cymbals, horns and tambourines, and priests would slash themselves with knives while performing an ecstatic

Inside the Roman Pantheon

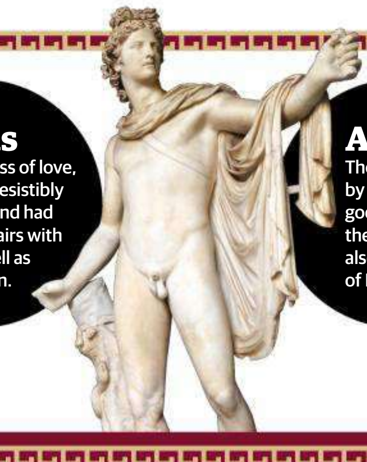
The mystery cults supplemented, but did not supplant, the Romans' belief in their traditional gods

Jupiter

God of the sky, Jupiter was the greatest of the gods. He was the husband of Juno and the father of many of gods and heroes.

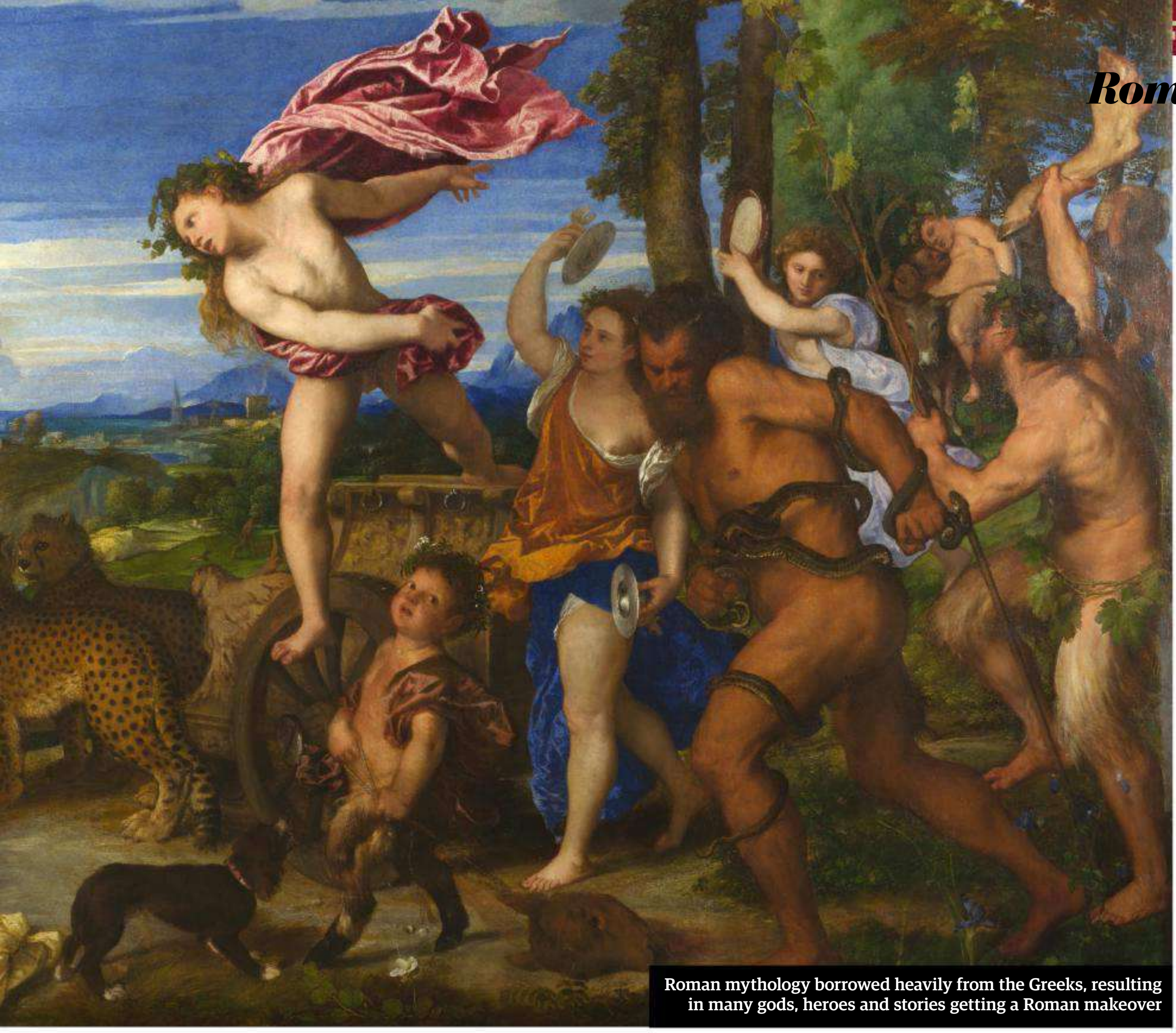
Venus

The goddess of love, she was irresistibly beautiful and had several affairs with gods as well as mortal men.



Apollo

The son of Jupiter by Leto was the god of music and the Sun. He was also the brother of Diana.



Roman mythology borrowed heavily from the Greeks, resulting in many gods, heroes and stories getting a Roman makeover

Talismans and trinkets

The Romans encountered their gods everywhere – in the home and on the road

The Roman home was protected by a guardian spirit, and these were known as lares. In origin, these were ancestral family spirits that watched over the household of its descendants. These tutelary gods stood at the centre of the family's religious life. A shrine containing a statuette of the spirit was set beside the hearth, and each morning they were greeted with prayers. At festival time, the lares were offered food. Outside the home, lares were thought to watch over the crossroads where the family's fields met another's. As such, they came to be known as the gods of travellers also.

Another group of guardian spirits, known as penates, were the gods that protected the food pantry of a Roman household and also watched over the family as a whole. Said to have been brought to Rome from Troy by the hero Aeneas, these spirits were worshiped at the hearth of the home where a fire was always kept lit in their honour. At mealtime, the family sacrificed a bit of food to their household penates. In addition to the domestic lares and penates, there were also public spirits that watched over the Roman state.

dance. Their flowing blood symbolically ensured the fertility of the world.

One particularly dramatic ritual of Magna Mater that may have occurred was the taurobolium - a baptism in bull's blood. A pit was dug and wooden planks were placed over it. Next, a man lowered himself into the pit, and a bull was led onto the planks. The animal was then impaled by a spear, and its blood was allowed to run down through the spaces between the planks, spilling onto the man below. Once the bull had been drained of its blood, the man emerged, ritually purified for 20 years by the power of the Great Mother, acting through the bull's blood. This account comes from a Christian source and is considered anachronistic, and many historians believe that the blood was actually carefully collected into vessels instead.

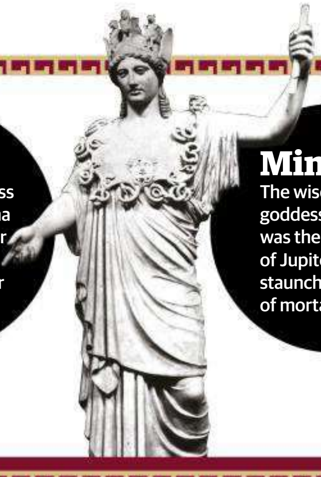
The Egyptian goddess Isis shared much in common with the Great Mother, as they were seen as mistresses of life and fertility. Her rites guaranteed a blissful afterlife for participants. The theme of these ceremonies was the ritual re-enactment of the death and resurrection of her husband, Osiris. Osiris reborn also symbolised the rebirth of nature in springtime. A dead person might be summoned back to the realm of the living with the words, "Raise yourself to life: you do not die!" and "Osiris live! Stand up, unhappy one who dost lie there! I am Isis!" Just as Isis raised Osiris from the dead, so would the dead worshiper be raised again to life.

Like Magna Mater and Isis, Demeter was a mother goddess, and her mysteries at Eleusis commemorated her search for her daughter Persephone, or Kore, the maiden in Greek mythology. Carried off by Hades, Kore was held captive in the Underworld. The inconsolable Demeter roamed the Earth searching for her. Crops would not grow, and plague and death stalked the world. So bad did things become that Zeus himself was forced to intervene and secure Kore's freedom. But because she had eaten pomegranate seeds while in Hades' realm, she was forced ever after to spend a third of the year there as his consort. Kore's time in the Underworld is thus one of great sadness for her mother, and during this time, the season of winter, nothing grows upon Earth. With the arrival of spring, Demeter is reunited with her daughter and life returns to the earth.

Once an initiate had been inducted into the Lesser Mysteries, he or she was allowed to take

Diana

A maiden goddess of the hunt, Diana was the daughter of Jupiter by Latona and sister to Apollo.



Minerva

The wise warrior goddess Minerva was the daughter of Jupiter and a staunch patroness of mortal heroes.

Vulcan

Vulcan, son of Jupiter, was the smith of the gods, producing wondrous items in his forge. His wife was Venus.

Vesta

Goddess of the hearth, Vesta watched over the fire of the Roman household. She was the sister of Jupiter.

part in the Greater Mysteries, which took place over several days of sacrifices, purification and fasting. The precise elements of the mysteries themselves are not known to historians today - they were shrouded in secrecy, after all - but they seem to have included music, dancing and a re-enactment of the abduction and recovery of Persephone. The most dramatic part of the mysteries seems to have been a vision beheld by the participant of something in the brightest of light.

Mithras was in origin a god associated with truth and a lieutenant of the primary Zoroastrian deity, Ahura Mazda. Once it came into the Roman world, Mithraism was a heavily changed religion that now viewed Mithras as a saviour god. The rites of his cult echoed the origin myth of Mithras, who was said to have been born from a rock. Ahura Mazda had created first a wild bull, and Mithras wrestled it and hauled it into a cave. The bull escaped, but Mithras tracked it down and slew it by a dagger thrust to its throat. Life then flowed from the gushing blood of the bull. Mithraists would convene their worship meetings in underground chapels, which they called caves, where they shared communal meals of wine and bread. The goal of Mithraism was to purify the immortal soul, making it ready for a return to the realm of light upon death of the individual.

SUPPRESSION

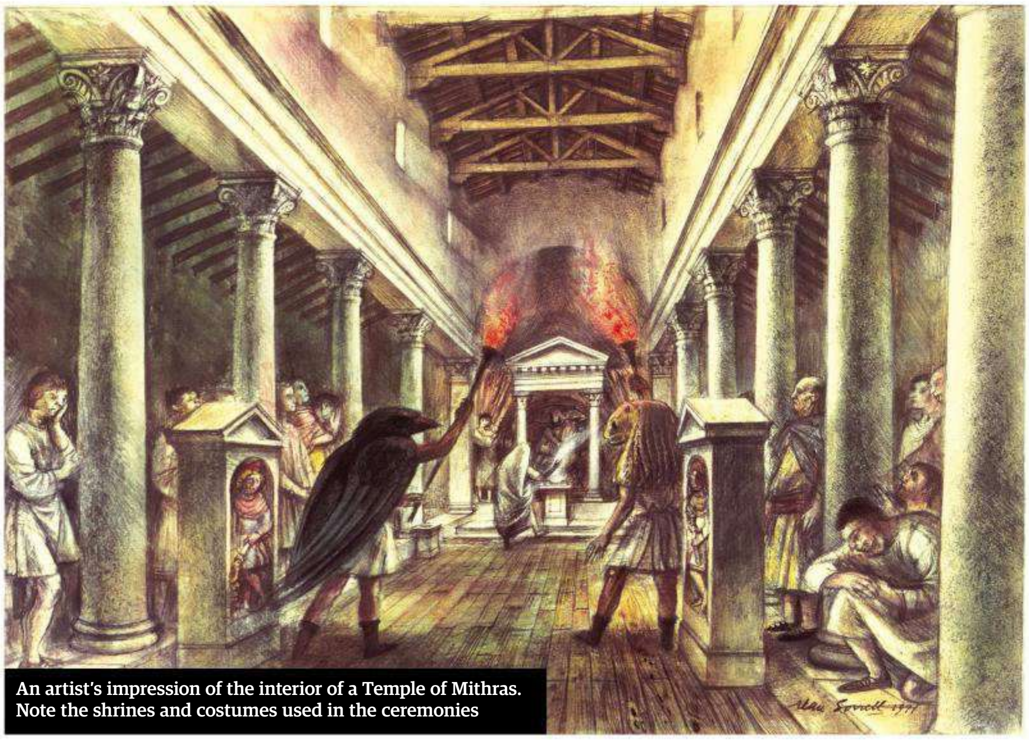
Romans did not universally approve of mystery cults, even if they undeniably achieved widespread popularity and won many adherents. Even some emperors joined the societies, not least among them Emperor Domitian (who reigned from 81-96 CE) who was initiated into the mysteries of Isis, and Emperor Gallienus (who reigned from 260-268), who became an initiate of the Eleusinian Mysteries.

One Roman traditionalist - the 1st century BCE historian Livy - would write in horror that during Bacchic mysteries, "Matrons dressed as bacchants with their hair dishevelled, would run to the Tiber with burning torches, and plunge the torches into the water, then bring them up again still alight - as live sulphur was mixed with calcium. Men were said to be abducted by the gods, when they were tied to machines and carried out of sight into hidden caves." Not least, Livy seems to have feared the mysteries as excuses for all sorts of sexual licence between the male and female initiates. To some extent, the intense insistence upon secrecy logically, if unintentionally, induced anxiety among the uninitiated of Roman society.

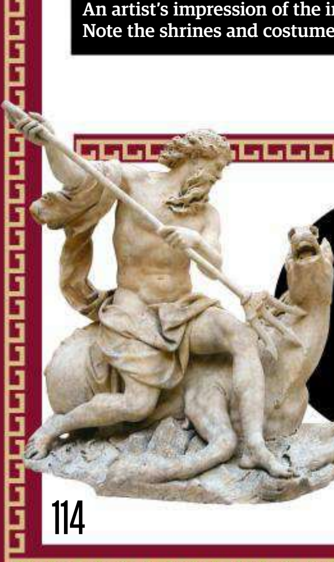
Constantine's victory at the Milvian Bridge in 312 under the auspices of the Christian God led him to make Christianity a legal religion under imperial law in the next year in the Edict of Milan. Christians increased in number and power as the 4th century progressed. The legal position of paganism, which the mystery cults were part of, began to deteriorate as Christianity became the most powerful religion in the empire. Still, the practice of mystery religions did not disappear quickly. Even in the latter half of the 4th century prominent Romans would proudly acknowledge having been initiated into the mysteries of various cults. However, at the end of the century, in 391, Emperor Theodosius I forbade the worship of pagan gods in Rome as well as visits to their temples. In the following year, he outlawed the practice of all pagan religions whatsoever.

Other forces would also act to bring about the end of mystery religions. In c.395, the Goths attacked and destroyed the sanctuary of Demeter and Kore at Eleusis. The sanctuary was never to be repaired, bringing an end to the cult mysteries held there since at least the 6th century BCE. Paganism would hold on in diminished form for many years. There were still enough adherents that Saint Augustine saw the need to compose his *City Of God* to rebut the allegation, put forward by Rome's remaining pagans, that the neglect of the old gods had led to the sack of Rome by the Visigoths in 410. The overall trend, however, was for mystery religions to fade away as the ancient world changed and the Middle Ages began.

> "The intense insistence upon secrecy logically, if unintentionally, induced anxiety among the uninitiated of Roman society"

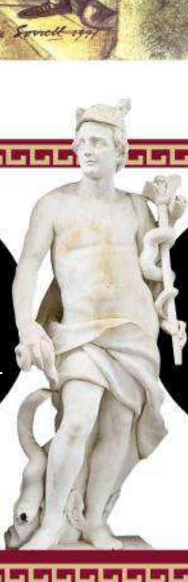


An artist's impression of the interior of a Temple of Mithras. Note the shrines and costumes used in the ceremonies

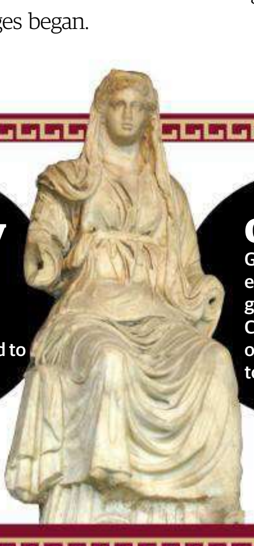


Neptune
The trident-wielding Neptune was lord of the sea and the younger brother of Jupiter.

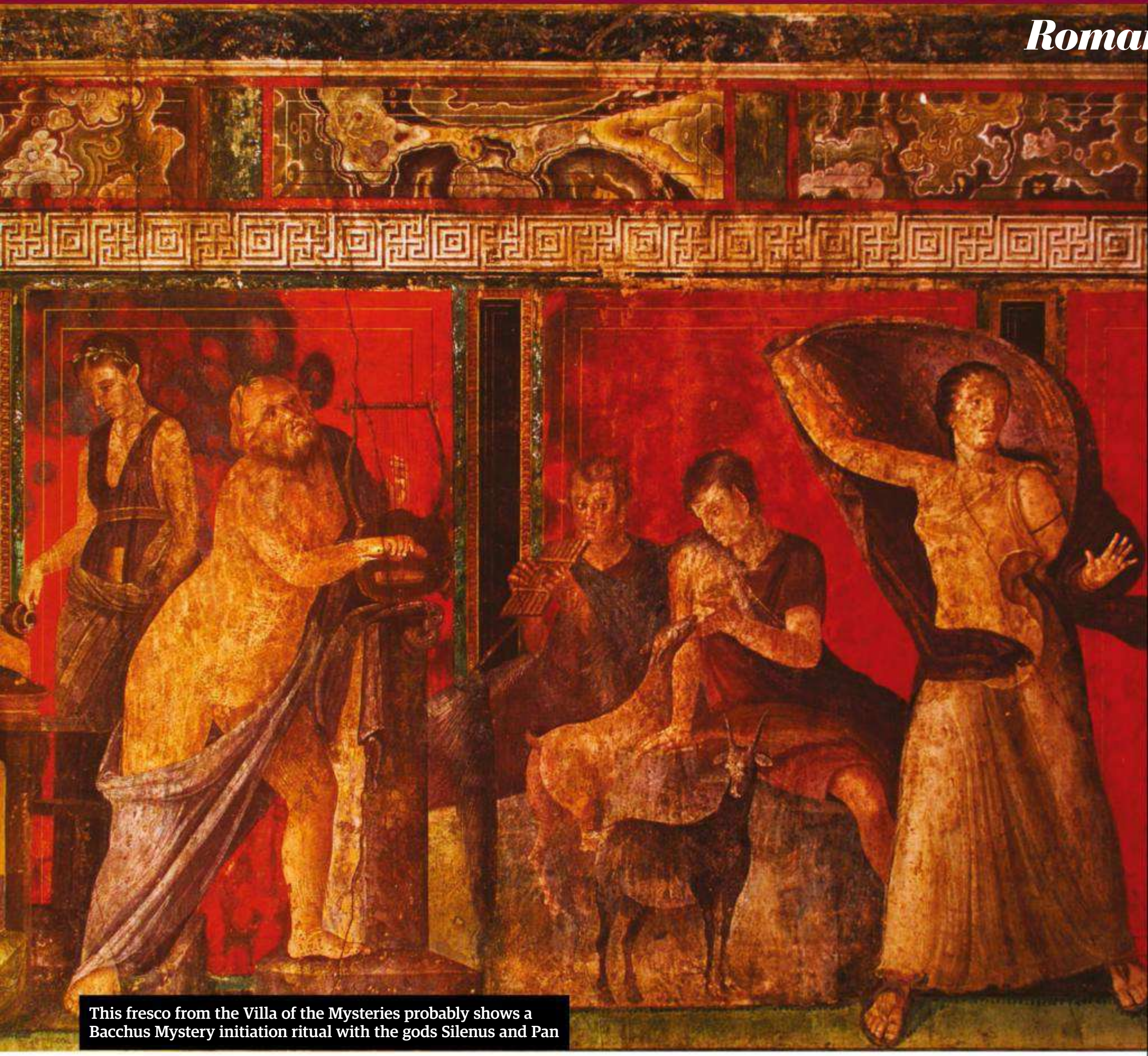
Mars
Mars was the honoured god of war among the military-minded Romans, second only to Jupiter in their estimation.



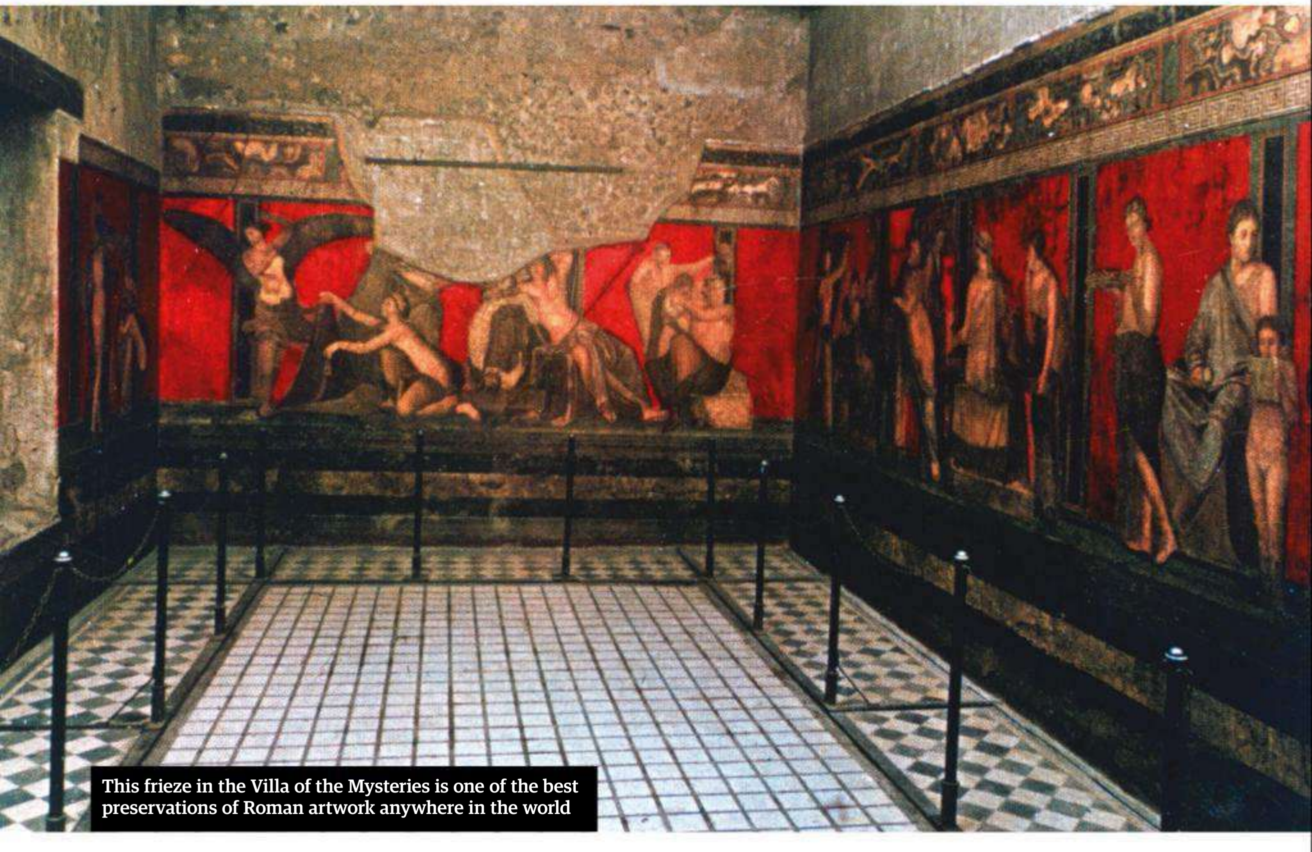
Mercury
The fleet-footed messenger of Jupiter, Mercury conducted the spirits of the dead to the Underworld.



Ceres
Goddess of the earth and all growing things, Ceres was patroness of fertility and sister to Jupiter.



This fresco from the Villa of the Mysteries probably shows a Bacchus Mystery initiation ritual with the gods Silenus and Pan



This frieze in the Villa of the Mysteries is one of the best preservations of Roman artwork anywhere in the world

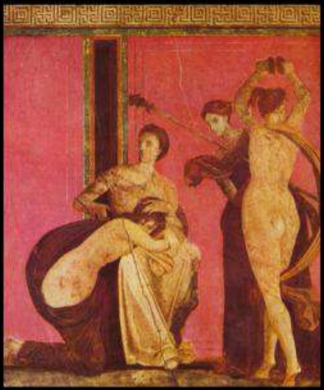
VILLA OF THE MYSTERIES

Buried for centuries in ash, the Villa of the Mysteries in Pompeii is a window on to the mystery worship of ancient times

The mystery cult of Bacchus (Dionysus) found great favour in Rome and elsewhere in Italy. However, rare is the case where we can see how the mysteries of his cult, or that of any other god, for that matter, were celebrated by adherents. We are fortunate then to have the Villa of the Mysteries, a home that was preserved from the ravages of time, ironically, by the ravages of the volcanic eruption of Mount Vesuvius. In 79 CE, the nearby southern Italian town of Pompeii was buried completely by volcanic ash, and forgotten. It lay undisturbed until its rediscovery in the 18th century.

Within the villa is a room with painted friezes along its walls that depict the mystery worship of Bacchus in glorious colour and remarkable detail. These are arguably the most famous paintings of the Roman world still in existence. Running for about 20 metres around the room, the friezes show a number of individual figures at roughly human size of gods, men, women and mythological beings engaged in the cultic worship of Bacchus.

Interpreting the scenes is difficult, as much of their context has been lost. A damaged painting of Bacchus and his consort, Ariadne, would have been the first to be viewed when entering the room. In one scene, a plump Silenus plays a lyre; in another, a youthful Pan plays his flute. In one, a woman rests her head on the lap of another while a winged woman strikes her with a rod. Next to them both dances a woman with cymbals. It is most likely that the friezes inside the room depicted the initiation of a young woman in to the cult of Bacchus.



Rumours of sexual abuse and murder saw the Bacchus Mystery outlawed for a time

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INSIDE TEMPLO MAYOR

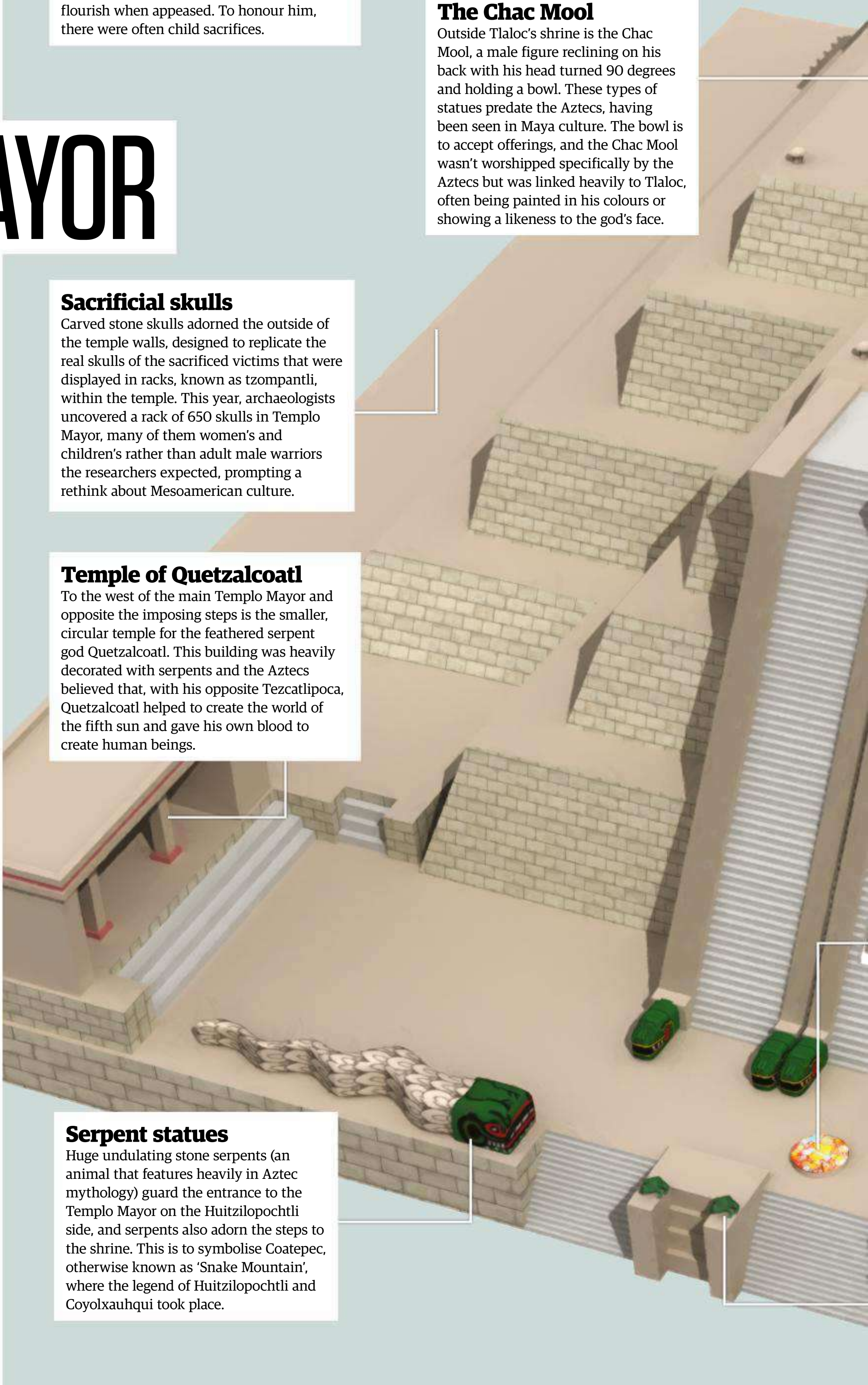
THE GREAT AZTEC PYRAMID AT TENOCHTITLÁN, 1497

Templo Mayor is the Spanish name for Hueyi Teocalli, the almighty pyramid temple that dominated the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlán, where Mexico City stands today. It was originally built as simple shrines to the fierce Aztec deities of war and of rain – Huitzilopochtli and Tlaloc, respectively – in 1325 on a swampy island in Lake Toxcoco. But before the Aztec Empire fell in 1521, the temple was rebuilt at least six times.

Each Aztec ruler added a new outermost layer to the temple out of respect to the gods and to ensure that his reign would be immortalised within the great stone structure. As they added layers to the temple, the Aztecs buried sacrificial deposits between the stones. So far, archaeologists have uncovered 6,000 objects hidden between the layers. The sixth and final rebuild took place in 1487, bringing the temple to a massive 60 metres (180 feet) tall, a stone behemoth on the skyline of Tenochtitlán and both the spiritual and physical heart of the Aztec Empire.

Covered in stucco and painted vibrant colours, stone reliefs depicting the stories of the Aztec pantheon adorned the temple, along with detailed carvings of animals and numerous statues. The huge staircases leading up to the shrines were purposely steep to ensure that the bodies flung from the sacrificial stone at the top would reach the bottom. These sacrifices were frequent enough that the bright white steps up to the shrine of Huitzilopochtli were stained red with blood. While the great temple also housed several shrines to individual gods, it also stood in a precinct of approximately 78 other sacred buildings.

Once Tenochtitlán fell to the siege led by Spanish conquistador Hernán Cortés, some of the stones from the great temple were used to build the Christian cathedrals of Mexico City. However, thanks to the constant layering-up of the temple, some of the original ruins still remain today.



Shrine to Tlaloc
The north side of the two shrines at the top of the great temple is for Tlaloc, the god of rain and fertility. This god was feared and revered as he was believed to send thunder and floods if angered and rain to help crops flourish when appeased. To honour him, there were often child sacrifices.

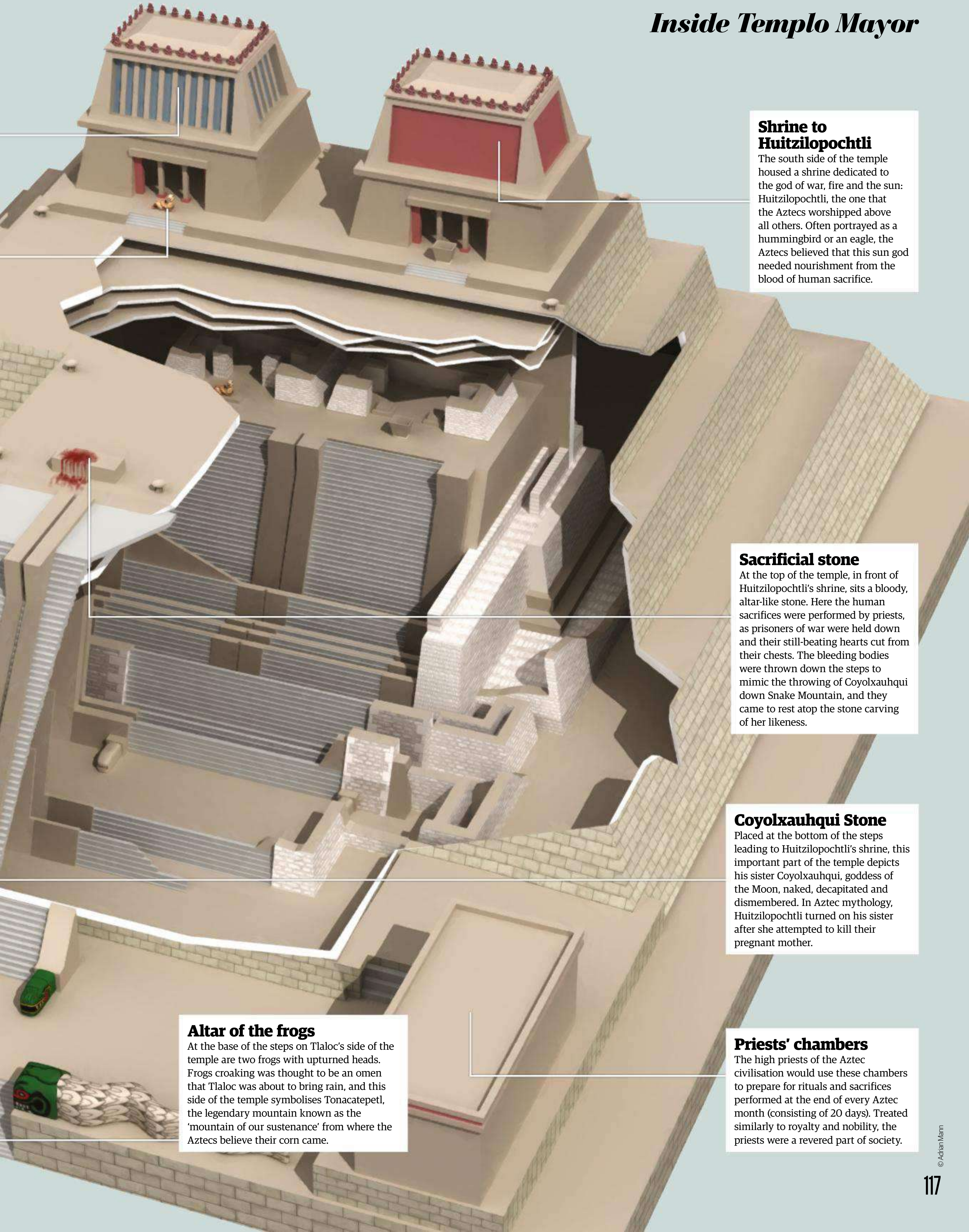
The Chac Mool
Outside Tlaloc's shrine is the Chac Mool, a male figure reclining on his back with his head turned 90 degrees and holding a bowl. These types of statues predate the Aztecs, having been seen in Maya culture. The bowl is to accept offerings, and the Chac Mool wasn't worshipped specifically by the Aztecs but was linked heavily to Tlaloc, often being painted in his colours or showing a likeness to the god's face.

Sacrificial skulls
Carved stone skulls adorned the outside of the temple walls, designed to replicate the real skulls of the sacrificed victims that were displayed in racks, known as tzompantli, within the temple. This year, archaeologists uncovered a rack of 650 skulls in Templo Mayor, many of them women's and children's rather than adult male warriors the researchers expected, prompting a rethink about Mesoamerican culture.

Temple of Quetzalcoatl
To the west of the main Templo Mayor and opposite the imposing steps is the smaller, circular temple for the feathered serpent god Quetzalcoatl. This building was heavily decorated with serpents and the Aztecs believed that, with his opposite Tezcatlipoca, Quetzalcoatl helped to create the world of the fifth sun and gave his own blood to create human beings.

Serpent statues
Huge undulating stone serpents (an animal that features heavily in Aztec mythology) guard the entrance to the Templo Mayor on the Huitzilopochtli side, and serpents also adorn the steps to the shrine. This is to symbolise Coatepec, otherwise known as 'Snake Mountain', where the legend of Huitzilopochtli and Coyolxauhqui took place.

Inside Templo Mayor



Shrine to Huitzilopochtli

The south side of the temple housed a shrine dedicated to the god of war, fire and the sun: Huitzilopochtli, the one that the Aztecs worshipped above all others. Often portrayed as a hummingbird or an eagle, the Aztecs believed that this sun god needed nourishment from the blood of human sacrifice.

Sacrificial stone

At the top of the temple, in front of Huitzilopochtli's shrine, sits a bloody, altar-like stone. Here the human sacrifices were performed by priests, as prisoners of war were held down and their still-beating hearts cut from their chests. The bleeding bodies were thrown down the steps to mimic the throwing of Coyolxauhqui down Snake Mountain, and they came to rest atop the stone carving of her likeness.

Coyolxauhqui Stone

Placed at the bottom of the steps leading to Huitzilopochtli's shrine, this important part of the temple depicts his sister Coyolxauhqui, goddess of the Moon, naked, decapitated and dismembered. In Aztec mythology, Huitzilopochtli turned on his sister after she attempted to kill their pregnant mother.

Altar of the frogs

At the base of the steps on Tlaloc's side of the temple are two frogs with upturned heads. Frogs croaking was thought to be an omen that Tlaloc was about to bring rain, and this side of the temple symbolises Tonacatepetl, the legendary mountain known as the 'mountain of our sustenance' from where the Aztecs believe their corn came.

Priests' chambers

The high priests of the Aztec civilisation would use these chambers to prepare for rituals and sacrifices performed at the end of every Aztec month (consisting of 20 days). Treated similarly to royalty and nobility, the priests were a revered part of society.

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THE ANCIENT OLYMPICS

The origins of these spirited events revealed

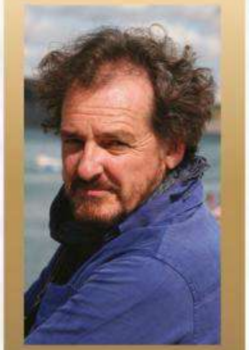
THE FESTIVAL

Every four years from 776 BCE to around 425, competitors and spectators flocked to a sanctuary in southern Greece to participate in one of the most extraordinary events of the ancient world. It was a festival in honour of Zeus, the king of the gods, who ruled from the snow-capped peaks of Mount Olympus far to the north. Indeed, it was from Olympian Zeus that the location of this spectacular sanctuary was named: Olympia.

The festival had humble origins. In its early years, participants came mainly from Elis, the city just under 65 kilometres away that controlled the sanctuary. On the morning following the August full moon, they sang hymns, chanted prayers, and sacrificed oxen to Zeus, burning the bones and fat on the altar as an offering before cooking the meat for that evening's banquet. As the mouth-watering aromas filled the air, many of those present made their way a little to the east, stripped down to their loincloths – only from 720 BCE were competitors naked – and, while the rest looked on, raced back to the finishing line near the altar. The distance, around 180 metres, was called in Greek a 'stade', the origin of our word 'stadium'. In 30 seconds the race was over, and in 776 BCE the winner was proclaimed. He was a local baker called Coroebus, that year's only victor, for the foot race was the only contest. The Olympic Games began as one Olympic game.

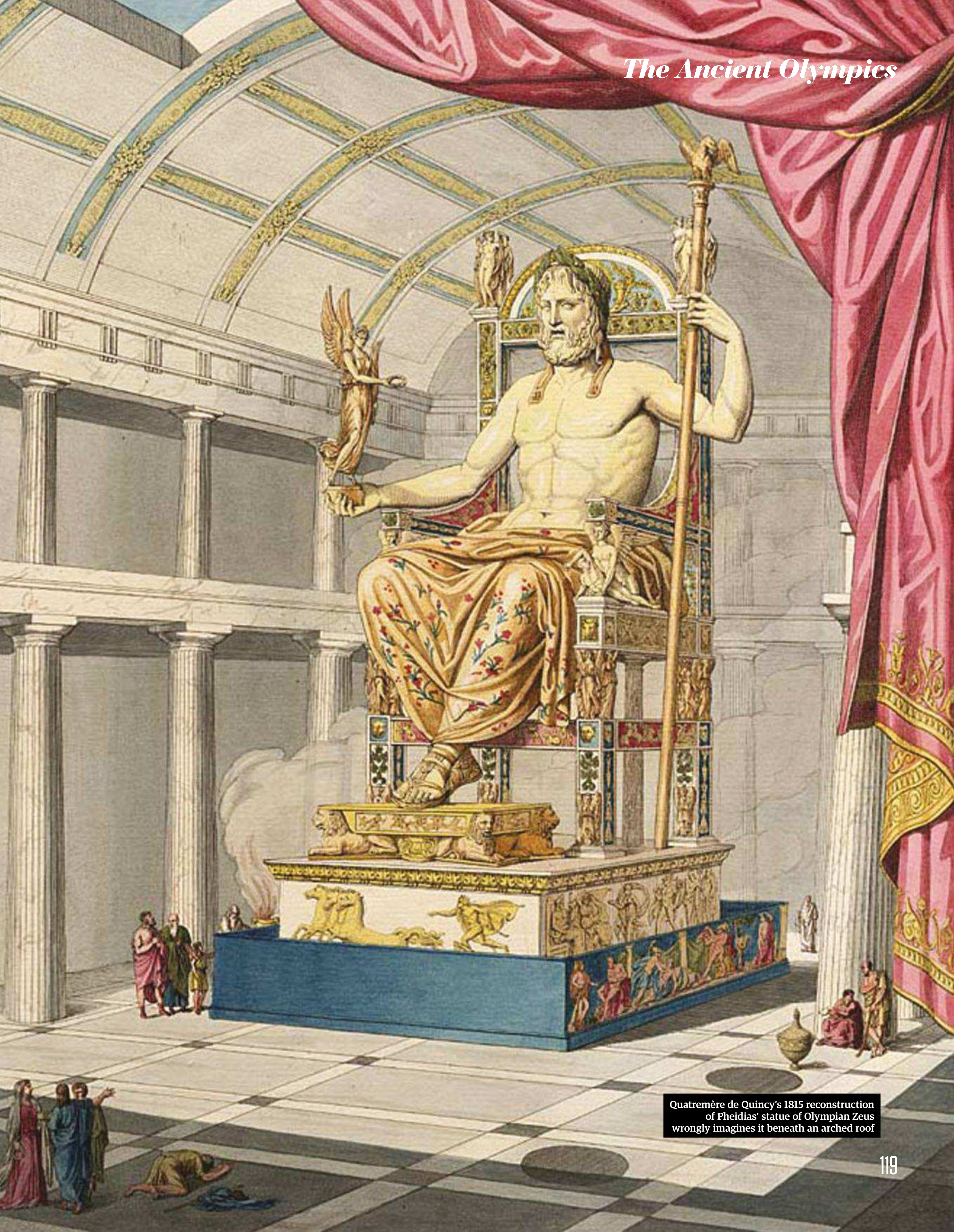
So it remained for two generations, but from 724 BCE other events were introduced, and the reputation of the festival began to spread. Coincidentally, this was a time of new beginnings for the Greeks, as many mainland cities sent shiploads of citizens to plant new settlements in foreign lands from Marseilles in the west to Byzantium in the east, and from Cyrene in Libya to Epidamnus in modern Albania. As the Greek footprint expanded, Greeks felt a growing need to maintain, or create, a cultural identity. The 5th century BCE historian Herodotus writes that what united them was "kinship in blood and speech, the shrines of gods, the sacrifices that we have in common, and the similarity of our lifestyle". He might have added 'competitiveness', because inspiring almost every Greek was the advice given to Achilles in the *Iliad*, a poem like the Olympics with its roots in the 8th century BCE: "Always to be best and to surpass all others".

As the *Iliad*, with its tales of bravery culminating in funeral games for Patroclus, was

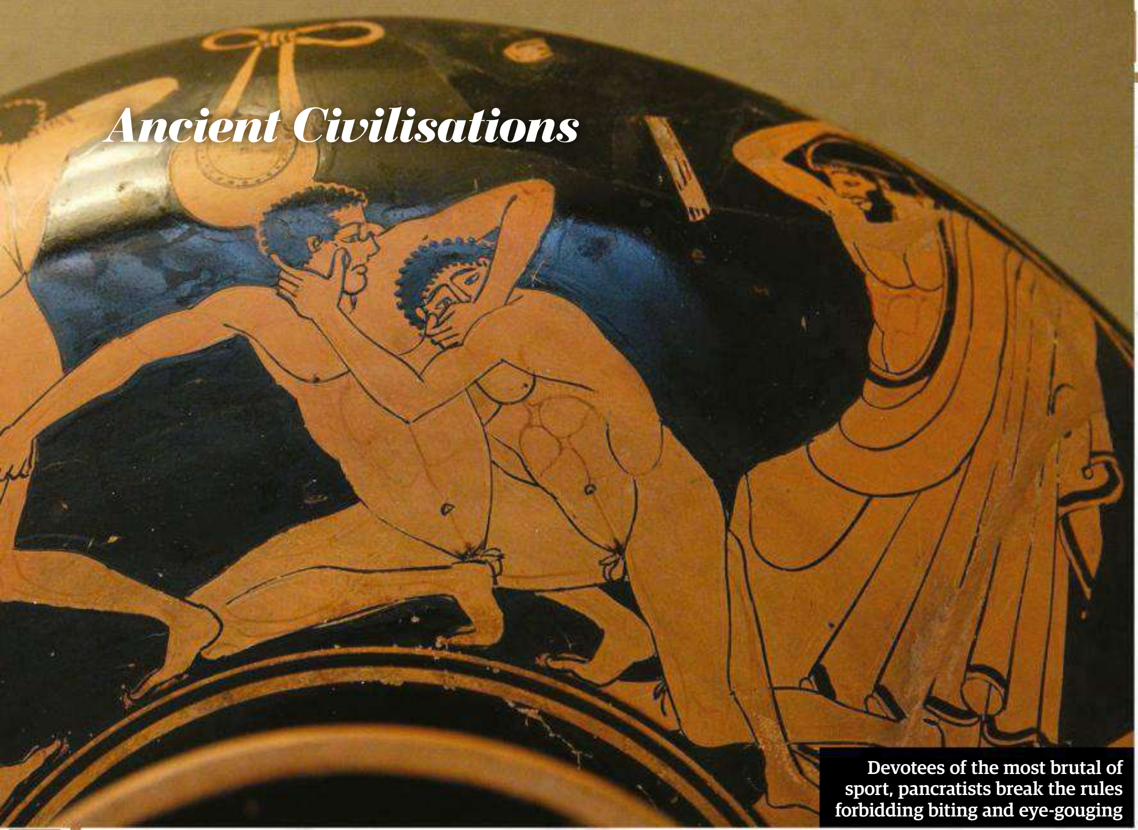


DAVID STUTTARD

David is a writer, lecturer, dramaturg and author of *Power Games: Ritual And Rivalry At The Ancient Greek Olympics* – a book focusing on the 416 BCE Olympic games. His biography of Alcibiades, from Harvard University Press, hits the shelves in Spring 2018.



Quatremère de Quincy's 1815 reconstruction of Pheidias' statue of Olympian Zeus wrongly imagines it beneath an arched roof



Devotees of the most brutal of sport, pancratists break the rules forbidding biting and eye-gouging

"OLYMPIA WAS NOW ATTRACTING NOT JUST ATHLETES BUT THE RICH AND INFLUENTIAL"

fuelling the Greeks' imagination, the setting where they could locate themselves as the true heirs of the heroes of the Trojan War was fast becoming recognised as Olympia and, although other sports-related festivals sprang up – notably at Delphi, Corinth and Nemea – the Olympics reigned supreme. By the 6th century BCE, competitors were arriving from all over the Greek world and, when in the early 5th century mainland Greeks successfully fought off the Persian invasions while Sicilian Greeks defeated the Carthaginians and Etruscans, it was at Olympia that they made offerings of thanks.

As the festival's status grew, the Games expanded to cover five days. At the same time, new opportunities to display power through sacrifice and banquets meant that Olympia was now attracting not just athletes but the rich and influential as well as kings and politicians eager to strut the international stage, hold high-level conferences and negotiate high-profile deals. Many were keen to compete in the chariot race, the Games' most expensive event. Among them was Alexander I, King of Macedon, whose people many considered not to be pure Greeks. In 504 BCE, he successfully proved his eligibility by tracing his ancestors back to the Peloponnesian city of Argos. Almost a century later in 416 BCE, the Athenian playboy politician Alcibiades too used the Olympic chariot race to proclaim his wealth and power by entering an unrivalled seven teams. Unsurprisingly he won, and to celebrate he entertained the spectators to a banquet, paid for in part by his wealthy backers from the Aegean islands of Chios and Lesbos.

Meanwhile, as the numbers of attendees swelled, others were attracted, too: not just merchants hoping to make valuable sales, but writers such as Herodotus, who read his *Histories* from the portico of Zeus' temple; artists such as Zeuxis, the inventor of trompe l'oeil, who wafted round Olympia in a cloak advertising his name in golden letters; and poets like the praise-singer Pindar, eager to win commissions from victorious athletes. Although the far-seeing orator Isocrates used the panhellenic gathering to make heartfelt pleas for Greek unity in the face of strong aggressors, they fell on deaf ears. At the battle of Chaeronea in 338 BCE, Philip II of Macedon defeated the mainland Greek states and marked his victory by erecting his 'Philippeion' – a round temple containing statues of himself and his family – at Olympia next to the Temple of Hera, wife of Zeus.

Under the Roman Empire the Olympics continued to thrive, though occasionally an emperor might bend the rules. In 67 CE, Nero not only rescheduled the Games to allow him to take part, he also tried to show his prowess by driving his own ten-horse chariot. But nothing went to plan. His biographer Suetonius records: "He fell from his chariot and was helped back in, but he could not continue and gave up before the end. Even so he won the victor's crown."

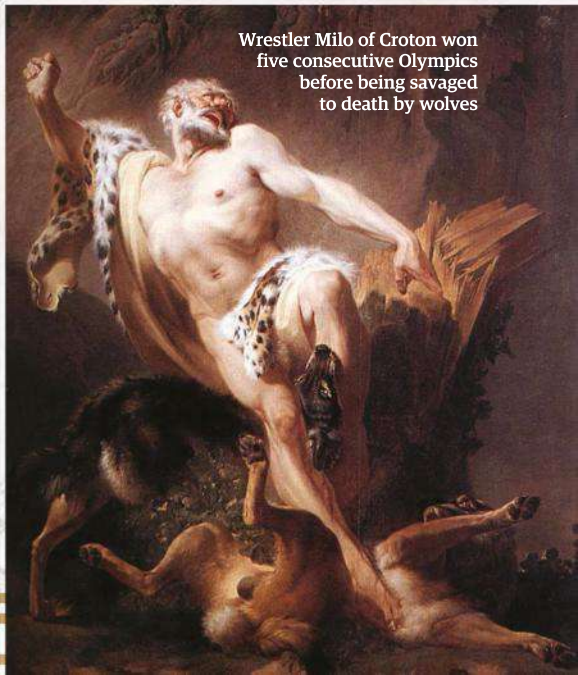
At last Christianity put paid to the Olympic Festival. After all, it was in honour of a pagan god. Outlawed in 391 by the Christian Emperor Theodosius, the Olympics struggled on for another 30 years, but by 425 the Games were no more.

MYTHOLOGY

All classical accounts of the Olympics' origins involved mythology. Some maintained that it was at Olympia that Zeus defeated his father Cronus and assumed control of gods and mortals. Others claimed that Heracles established the first Games to celebrate his victory over the local King Augeas, who had refused to pay the hero for one of his twelve labours, cleansing the royal stables.

Still others disagreed. For them, the founder of the Games was Pelops, an Ionian prince from Phocaea (modern Foça in Turkey). Learning that the wealthy Greek King Oenomaeus was offering his daughter, Hippodamia, in marriage to whomever beat him in a chariot race, Pelops was determined to win. Even though he possessed a team of magical horses, a gift from the god Poseidon, he took no chances. He bribed the chariot technician, Myrtilus, to remove the lynch pins from Oenomaeus' wheels and substitute them with wax replicas. As the wheels rotated ever faster, the friction made these lynch pins melt; the chariot collapsed and Oenomaeus was dragged to an excruciating death. However, instead of honouring his side of the agreement (to let Myrtilus sleep with Hippodamia), Pelops threw him off a cliff. But Myrtilus' ghost haunted Pelops, and the only way he could appease it was by performing funeral games - the first Olympic Games.

The influence of all three foundation myths were felt at Olympia. Dominating the Altis was a magnificent Temple of Zeus, within whose incense-laden inner chamber was a stunning statue of the seated god wearing the olive crown, awarded to victorious athletes. Created in a specially built onsite workshop by the Athenian sculptor Pheidias, it was 12 metres high and faced in gold and ivory, the only one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World located on Greek soil. Such was its numinous beauty that even the 2nd century Stoic philosopher Epictetus enthused that "people would consider it a great misfortune to die without ever seeing



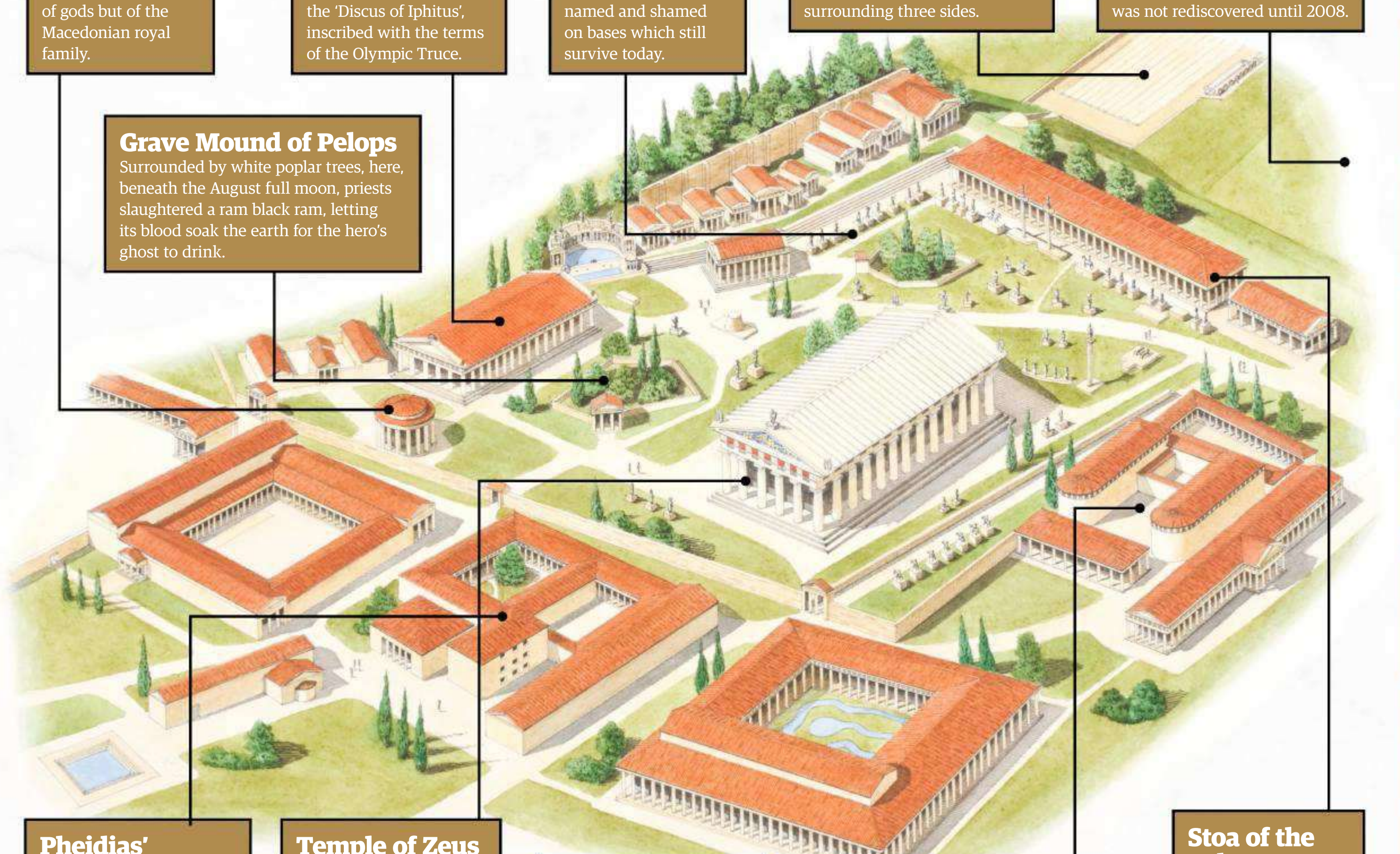
Wrestler Milo of Croton won five consecutive Olympics before being savaged to death by wolves it". Transported to Constantinople by rapacious Romans, the statue was destroyed by fire in 462, but we can still appreciate its power: Byzantine iconographers used it as their model for the face of God.

Meanwhile, a stone's throw from Zeus' temple to the north, Pelops' grave-mound was the site of one of the festival's most solemn ceremonies, when a black ram was sacrificed to the dead hero, while Heracles, said to be the first to make this sacrifice, was praised for something altogether more prosaic. Legend told that thanks to his sacrifice to the very specifically named Zeus Who-Banishes-Flies, Zeus Apomuios, he caused Olympia to be fly-free.

Spectators had good reason to be thankful, especially since the Games were celebrated in the scorching heat of August, when conditions could be horrendous. For the five days surrounding the new moon, those tens of thousands of spectators, who could not afford to stay at the Leonidaion – a 'hotel' built by a far-sighted entrepreneur in 360 BCE – pitched tents or slept rough outside the sanctuary with little running water and no sanitation, a jostling mêlée of increasingly rank bodies. For some, such as Epictetus, the abiding memory was "the sunburn and the filth… the cacophony, the din, the jostling, the shoving, the crowding, and so many people, each absorbed in doing his own thing". However, even he

THE SANCTUARY OF OLYMPIA IN THE 2ND CENTURY

Bristling with statues of victorious athletes, Olympia was dominated by the marble-roofed Temple of Zeus. Beyond Pelops' grave-mound, the original wooden columns of the Temple of Hera (700 BCE) were gradually replaced in stone, while to the northeast the stadium was separated from the sanctuary by an artificial rise.



Philippeion
Built to commemorate Philip II's victory in battle, this exquisite rotunda housed statues not of gods but of the Macedonian royal family.

Temple of Hera
This 7th Century BCE temple housed an archaic statue of the seated goddess with Zeus standing beside her, and the 'Discus of Iphitus', inscribed with the terms of the Olympic Truce.

Zanes statues
Overlooked by a row of temple-like treasuries, the statues were paid for from fines on cheating competitors, named and shamed on bases which still survive today.

Stadium
Races on the packed-earth track, 180m in length (the distance the Greeks called a 'stade'), were watched by spectators standing on the manmade mound surrounding three sides.

To Hippodrome
The 180m-long Hippodrome, scene of the thrilling horse- and chariot-races, was an elliptical race track. Buried in silt by the flooding River Alpheus, its site was not rediscovered until 2008.

Grave Mound of Pelops
Surrounded by white poplar trees, here, beneath the August full moon, priests slaughtered a ram black ram, letting its blood soak the earth for the hero's ghost to drink.

Pheidias' Workshop
An exact replica of the interior of Zeus' Temple (save for the addition of windows), Pheidias created the god's gold and ivory sculpture here before assembling it in situ.

Temple of Zeus
Adorned with exterior sculptures showing mythological scenes, the temple housed a 12m-high seated statue of Zeus faced in gold and ivory, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

Leonidaion
73m square and constructed between 330 and 320 BCE by Leonidas of Naxos, this proto-hotel featured a central courtyard with fragrant shrubs and splashing fountains.

Bouleuterion
In this complex of two apsidal buildings flanking central chamber with a colonnaded frontage, the Olympic Council met, presided over by a forbidding statue of Zeus Horkios ('Zeus, Oath God').

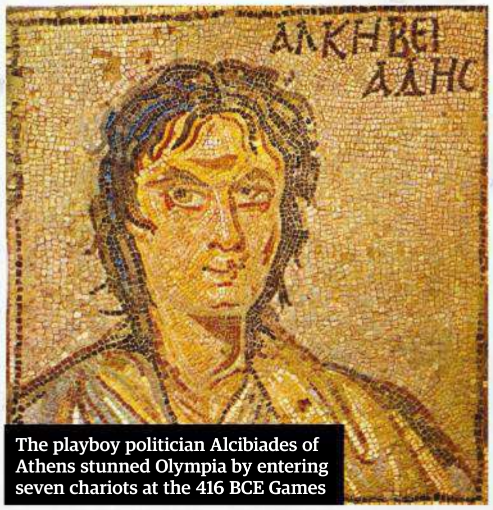
Stoa of the Echoes
This stoa (portico), 90m long, was begun in the mid 4th Century BCE. Excellent acoustics made it the ideal setting for contests between trumpeters.

admitted: "I think you're happy to put up with all of this when you think of the splendour of the spectacles."

ATHLETES

Being a masculine religious festival in honour of dead heroes and the great god Zeus, women, with the one exception of the Priestess of Demeter, were forbidden to attend the Games – though a parallel four-yearly women's festival was held at Olympia in honour of the goddess Hera. Gender was not the only restriction. No convicted murderer could enter unless they had first undergone a lengthy purification ritual and all participants were required to speak fluent Greek. Theoretically, any free man could take part, irrespective of social status. Indeed, the flamboyant Alcibiades refused to participate in any sport except chariot racing, the preserve of the rich, because it would mean competing with people of a lower class.

The only other category involved age. There were a handful of contests for boys: boxing, wrestling, the 'stade' race, and - for one year only in 628 BCE - the pentathlon. For every other competition, athletes had to be be adults over 20. A month before the Games began, all were required to gather at Elis, the city that controlled the Festival. Here, they were compelled to train and compete in initial heats under the stern watch of the Hellanodikai ('Judges of the Greeks'), while decisions were made about who should compete in which event.



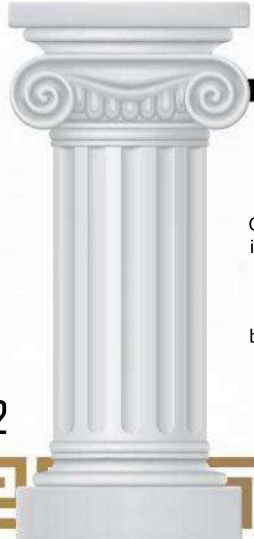
The playboy politician Alcibiades of Athens stunned Olympia by entering seven chariots at the 416 BCE Games

The Philippeion, commemorating Philip II's victory over Greece, housed statues of Macedon's royal family

It was now, too, that age categories were decided, something that without supporting documentation could be very sensitive. Sometimes, judgements were controversial. In 468 BCE, Pherias of Aegina was prevented from taking part in the men's wrestling because he looked too young. Another contestant, Nicasylos of Rhodes, was so well-developed that he was made to wrestle as an adult even though he was only 18. He won his match, as well as others elsewhere, but so brutal were the contests that he died at 20.

It was participants in contact sports who attracted the greatest interest and controversy. Perhaps the most famous was the wrestler Milo, victorious at five successive Olympics over 20 years. Stories about his strength were numerous, and when a neighbouring city attacked his hometown of Croton in south Italy, Milo dressed in a lion skin and strode out to meet them wielding a club. Believing him to be Heracles reincarnated, the invaders fled. Even Milo's death was sensational. The travel writer Pausanias reports that "somewhere in the Crotonian

FROM THE FIRST ANCIENT OLYMPICS TO THE FIRST MODERN GAMES



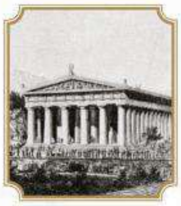
776 BCE
The first recorded Olympic Festival is held. The only contest, the stade race, is won by a local baker, Coroebus of Elis.

724 BCE
A second contest, the diaulos, is introduced, heralding a flurry of new events, including the pentathlon and wrestling (708 BCE), chariot racing (680 BCE) and horse racing (648 BCE).

720 BCE
After Orisippus of Megara won the stade race at the previous games, 'losing' his loincloth as he ran, athletes begin to compete naked, possibly believing that nudity made them faster.

564 BCE
Arrhichion of Phigalia wins the pankration despite being dead: his opponent, in pain from a dislocated toe, gives up just before Arrhachion dies from strangulation.

458 BCE
Local architect Libon's Temple of Zeus is completed, paid for from the spoils of war against a neighbouring city-state, and adorned with sculptures showing Pelops, Apollo and Heracles.



430 BCE
Pheidias of Athens (who also designed the Parthenon) completes his 13-metre tall seated statue of Zeus, faced in gold and ivory, carrying Winged Victory in its outstretched hand.

416 BCE
Alcibiades of Athens appropriates the Games for his personal aggrandisement, entering a record seven chariots and treating all the spectators to a banquet.

“ANY FREE MAN COULD TAKE PART, IRRESPECTIVE OF SOCIAL STATUS”

territory he came across a tree of dry wood split open and held with wedges. Milo decided to put his hands inside the tree, but the wedges slipped and he was held fast. Then the wolves found him. These beasts are particularly abundant in the territory of Croton…”

But it was a boxer who first brought the Games into disrepute. All participants were required to meet in the Olympic Council Building to swear an oath over the dismembered body of a boar that they would not cheat. However, in 388 BCE, Eupolus of Thessaly was found to have bribed three opponents. The Hellanodikai fined all four men and with the money set up four statues of Zeus, the so-called Zanēs, on the path down to the stadium, with inscriptions naming and shaming the guilty parties. The bases of 16 such Zanēs can still be seen today.

A more coveted memorial was awarded to the winner of the stade race. Individual cities were usually named each year after their chief magistrate, often leading to confusion for anyone trying to compile more regional chronologies. In the late 5th century BCE, the philosopher Hippias of Elis, wishing to create a universal dating system, invented a solution. He named 776 BCE ‘the year of the first Olympiad, when Coroebus of Elis won the stade’, 772 BCE ‘the year of the first Olympiad, when Antimachus of Elis won the stade’, and so on, with the intervening years numbered accordingly ‘the second, third and forth year of the Olympiad’. His system was accepted. From then on, the Greeks effectively began their historical era with the first Olympiad, and the winner of the Olympic ‘stade’ race and his city were immortalised throughout the Greek-speaking world.

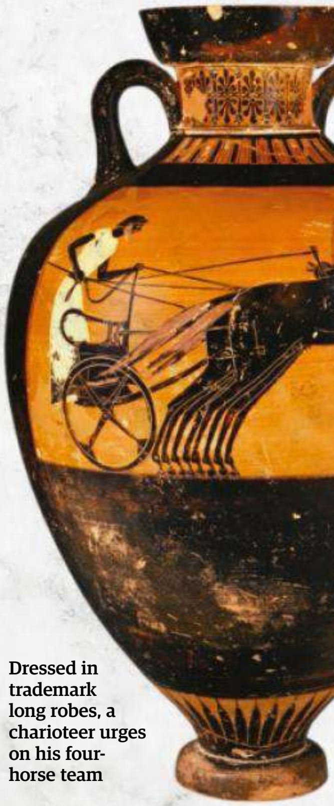
EVENTS

Although the stade was the first competitive event, after the introduction of the diaulos in 724 BCE others followed swiftly. Mostly these were of three types, the first being running: stade, diaulos, dolichos (4.5 kilometres), and a stade race in armour. The second consisted of trials of strength: boxing, wrestling, pancration (a deadly combination of barbaric brawling and bare-knuckle fight), as well as throwing the javelin and discus, with the third comprising equestrian sports: horse races and races for two-, four- and ten-horse chariots as well as a mule-cart races.

In addition, the pentathlon combined elements of both strength and speed. Once they were introduced, some events, such as the stade race, lasted for the entire life of the Games. Others, such as the mule-cart race, were quietly dropped.

Unlike at other international festivals, such as the Pythian Games held at Delphi in honour of Apollo or the Panathenaic Festival at Athens, the Olympics contained no formal cultural or artistic element. But there were two curious contests that had little to do with sporting prowess. Introduced in 396 BCE, the competitions for trumpeters and heralds became particularly popular when they found a new home in a colonnade built after the stadium was relocated more than 80 metres to the east of the Temple of Zeus. The acoustic of this so-called Stoa of the Echoes caused any sound to reverberate no less than seven times.

One event conspicuous for its absence is the marathon, which was inspired by an ancient Greek athletic feat. In 490 BCE, the runner Pheidippides raced to bring the news of the Greek victory over the Persians from Marathon to Athens, a distance of just over 46 kilometres. The race was created for the first modern Olympics of 1896, held not at Olympia but in Athens, the new capital of a proudly independent Greece. It marked the dawn of a modern Olympic era, secular games that would be largely unrecognisable to Greece’s classical forefathers, not least because of their ethos. Where previously athletes had striven ‘always to be best’, now, as their new founder Baron de Coubertin proclaimed: ‘What is important in life is not to triumph, but to take part; what is essential is not to have won, but to have fought well’.



Dressed in trademark long robes, a charioteer urges on his four-horse team

© Getty Images

388 BCE

Scandal mars Pisodorus of Rhodes’ win in the boys’ boxing match when his trainer is found to be a woman – his mother, who narrowly escapes execution as punishment for attending.

356 BCE

Philip II of Macedon learns of his chariot victory and the birth of his son, Alexander the Great, on the same day. His later Philippeion commemorates his defeat of Greece.

164 BCE

Leonidas of Rhodes wins the stade, diaulos and hoplitodromos races, a feat he repeats in the next two Olympics. His record nine wins is broken only in 2016 by Michael Phelps.

40 CE

Caligula tries to remove the statue of Zeus to Rome, but his workmen refuse to continue when they hear unearthly groans emanating from inside it.

67 CE

Nero builds a palace and triumphal arch near the hippodrome, ‘winning’ the ten-horse chariot race despite falling out and failing to complete the course.

391

With Christianity now the religion of imperial Rome, Emperor Theodosius bans all pagan worship, but the Olympic Games probably continue in some form until 425.

462

The statue of Zeus, removed to a patrician’s palace in Constantinople in 390, is destroyed by fire, but it has already inspired Byzantine artists’ impressions of the face of God.

1896

Inspired by the ancient Games, English public schools and Shropshire’s Much Wenlock Olympics, Pierre de Coubertin organises the first modern Olympics in Athens. The Greek Spyros Louis wins the marathon.

INSIDE AN ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ABODE

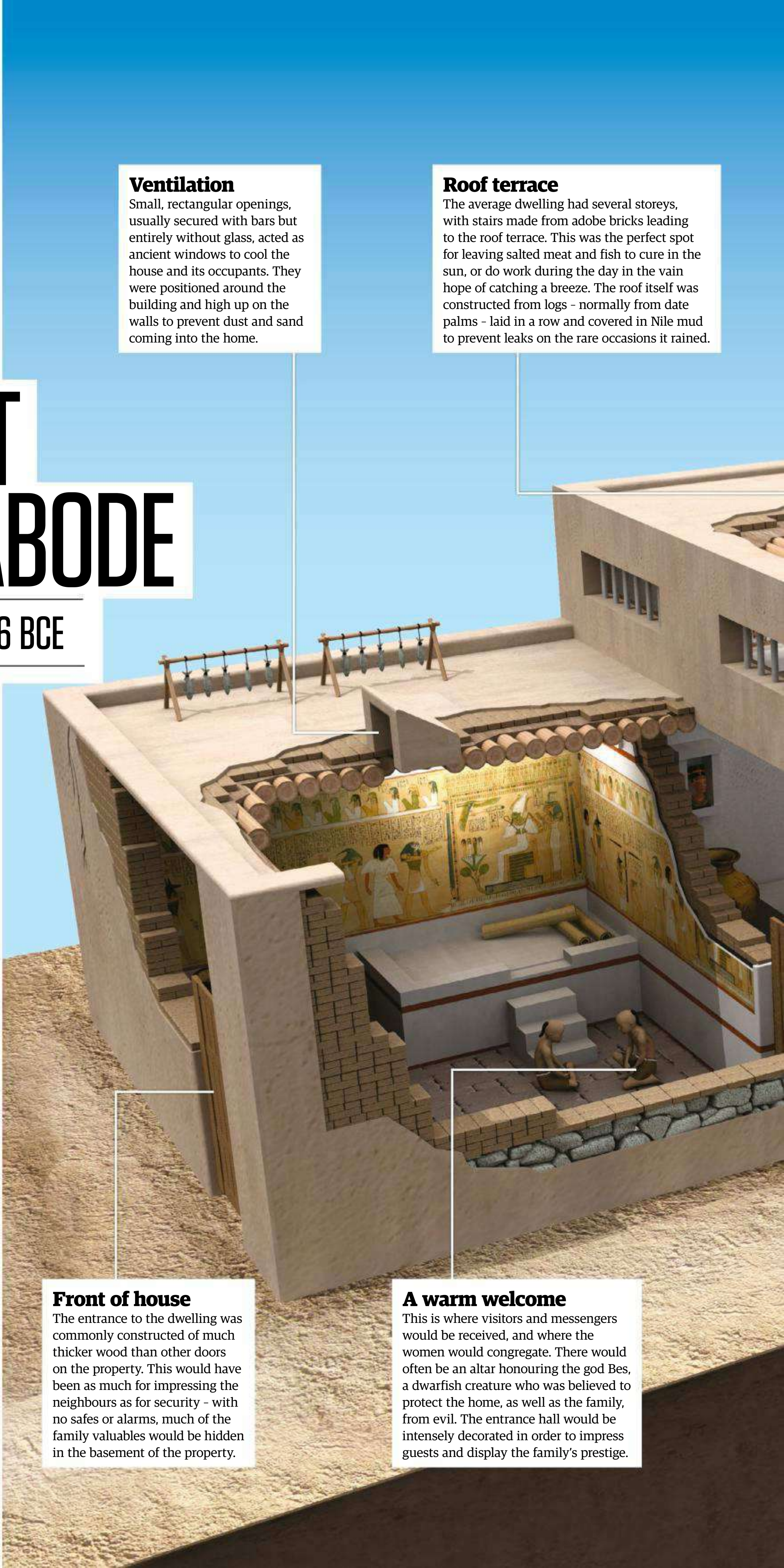
AT HOME IN EGYPT, C.3100-2686 BCE

Domestic houses in Ancient Egypt were constructed using mud bricks, or adobe bricks, and were home to several generations of the same family. Egyptian families were typically large and relatively poor, meaning that extended family members would often be crammed into the same modest living space, or living room, where food, conversation and housework were shared.

Windows were built high up on the building to prevent dirt blowing through the property, as well as to minimise the harsh direct glare of the sun roasting its occupants. Walls were painted white to help repel the intense heat, though decorative patterns were often applied to bring a little colour into the rooms.

Egyptian society bore a rigid hierarchy, and the structure of the home, and even its location within the town or city, reflected this. Elite families, those richest, and the most well-connected would own houses closest to the settlement's palace or temple. Within these homes, the heads of the family, usually the eldest male and his wife, would commonly have the privilege of their own chambers, often connected to a religious shrine that was itself incredibly important in the home. These would usually be positioned centrally in the house, with the children's rooms, kitchen areas and servants' quarters positioned in the peripheral.

However, the majority of city populations were poor farming families, who lived off the fertile Nile delta. Their homes were located further away from central, prestigious locations, and were also much more modest in size and structure. Even in these smaller dwellings, Egyptian hierarchy, and more specifically patriarchy, was visible, with the husband and father sitting, eating and sleeping in the more comfortable positions in the house.



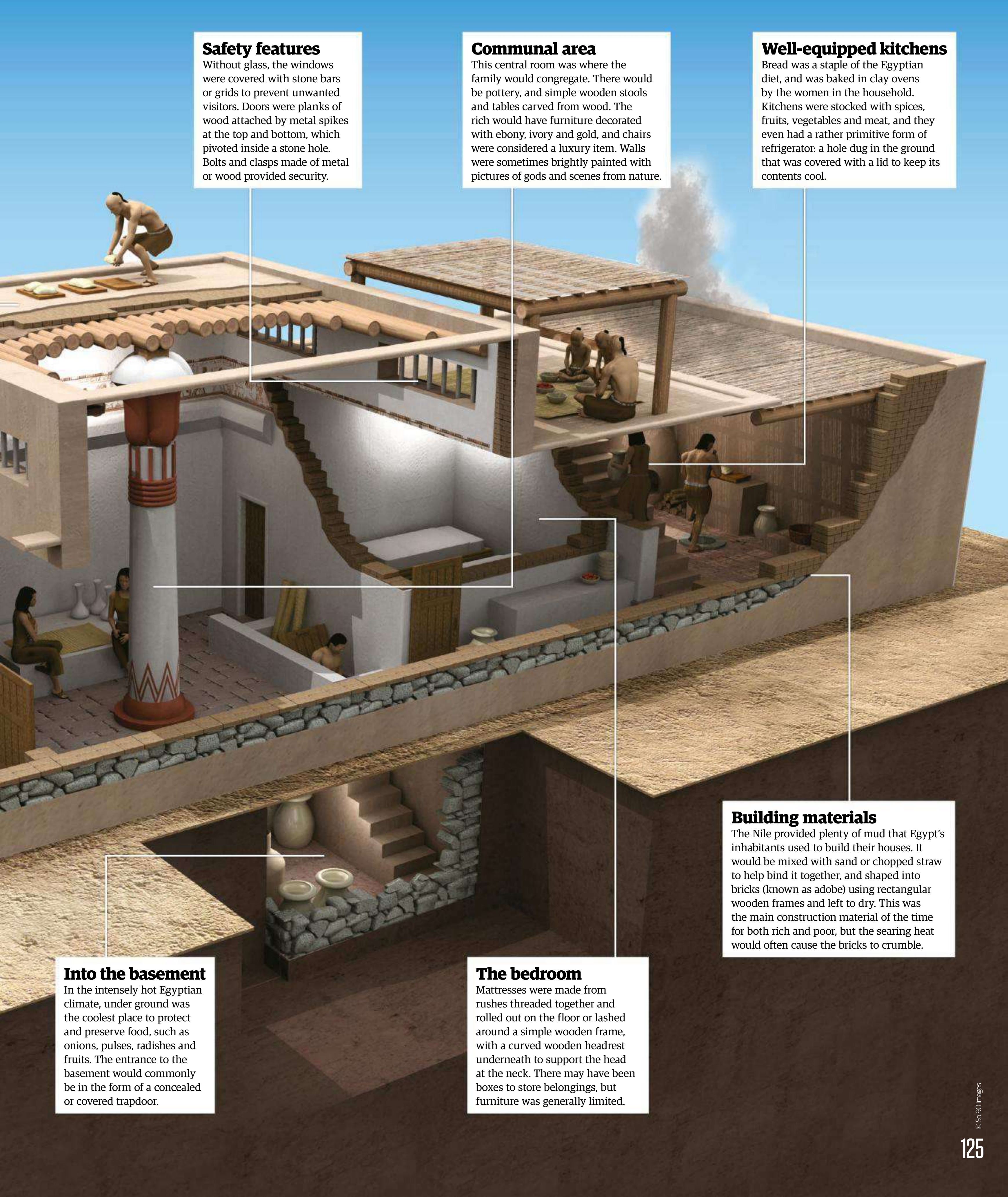
Ventilation
Small, rectangular openings, usually secured with bars but entirely without glass, acted as ancient windows to cool the house and its occupants. They were positioned around the building and high up on the walls to prevent dust and sand coming into the home.

Roof terrace
The average dwelling had several storeys, with stairs made from adobe bricks leading to the roof terrace. This was the perfect spot for leaving salted meat and fish to cure in the sun, or do work during the day in the vain hope of catching a breeze. The roof itself was constructed from logs – normally from date palms – laid in a row and covered in Nile mud to prevent leaks on the rare occasions it rained.

Front of house
The entrance to the dwelling was commonly constructed of much thicker wood than other doors on the property. This would have been as much for impressing the neighbours as for security – with no safes or alarms, much of the family valuables would be hidden in the basement of the property.

A warm welcome
This is where visitors and messengers would be received, and where the women would congregate. There would often be an altar honouring the god Bes, a dwarfish creature who was believed to protect the home, as well as the family, from evil. The entrance hall would be intensely decorated in order to impress guests and display the family's prestige.

Inside an Egyptian Abode



Safety features

Without glass, the windows were covered with stone bars or grids to prevent unwanted visitors. Doors were planks of wood attached by metal spikes at the top and bottom, which pivoted inside a stone hole. Bolts and clasps made of metal or wood provided security.

Communal area

This central room was where the family would congregate. There would be pottery, and simple wooden stools and tables carved from wood. The rich would have furniture decorated with ebony, ivory and gold, and chairs were considered a luxury item. Walls were sometimes brightly painted with pictures of gods and scenes from nature.

Well-equipped kitchens

Bread was a staple of the Egyptian diet, and was baked in clay ovens by the women in the household. Kitchens were stocked with spices, fruits, vegetables and meat, and they even had a rather primitive form of refrigerator: a hole dug in the ground that was covered with a lid to keep its contents cool.

Building materials

The Nile provided plenty of mud that Egypt's inhabitants used to build their houses. It would be mixed with sand or chopped straw to help bind it together, and shaped into bricks (known as adobe) using rectangular wooden frames and left to dry. This was the main construction material of the time for both rich and poor, but the searing heat would often cause the bricks to crumble.

Into the basement

In the intensely hot Egyptian climate, under ground was the coolest place to protect and preserve food, such as onions, pulses, radishes and fruits. The entrance to the basement would commonly be in the form of a concealed or covered trapdoor.

The bedroom

Mattresses were made from rushes threaded together and rolled out on the floor or lashed around a simple wooden frame, with a curved wooden headrest underneath to support the head at the neck. There may have been boxes to store belongings, but furniture was generally limited.

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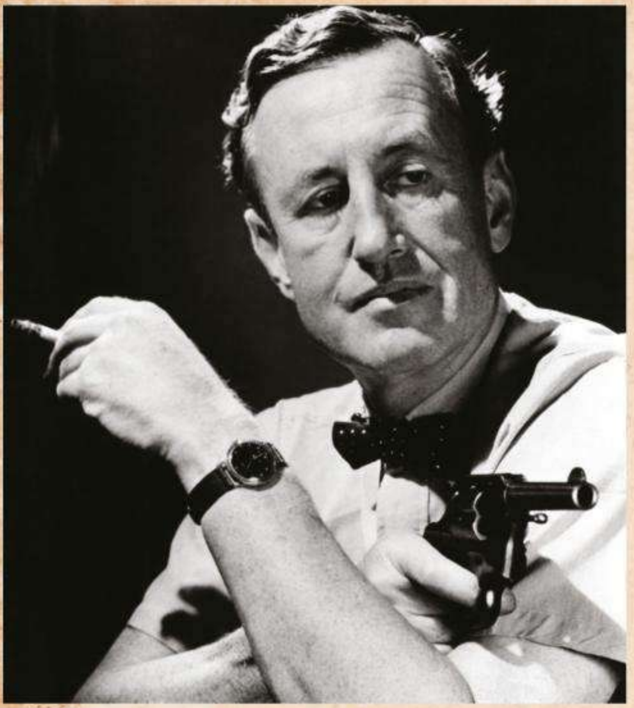
154 Mata Hari: Spy or Scapegoat?
The love and lies of the exotic dancer facing a firing squad



SPIES THAT WON WWII

These are the spies, secret agents, codebreakers and saboteurs – Britain's secret army who fought in the shadows in a bid to cripple Nazi Germany

Following the disaster that unfolded during the Battle of France, Britain found itself standing alone in the world; the only major power standing between Hitler and the conquest of Western Europe. With his army shattered and the threat of invasion a near certainty, Churchill needed a plan to take control of the dire situation. So he turned to his secret services, and the newly formed Special Operations Executive, to carry the war back to Hitler. A unique group of secret agents, overseas guerrilla fighters, code-breaking boffins and specially trained saboteurs would work tirelessly to turn the tide of conflict in the Allies' favour.

Here we choose 20 of the most notable agents and reveal their stories. Most worked to bring down tyranny. Some chose to support it. Many sacrificed their lives. Whatever their role, their exploits stand as some of most intriguing tales from World War II…

> "MOST WORKED TO BRING DOWN TYRANNY. SOME CHOSE TO SUPPORT IT. MANY SACRIFICED THEIR LIVES"

KEY TRAIT

- MASTERMIND
- ASSASSIN
- SABOTEUR
- CODEBREAKER
- DOUBLE AGENT
- SMOOTH TALKER

IAN FLEMMING

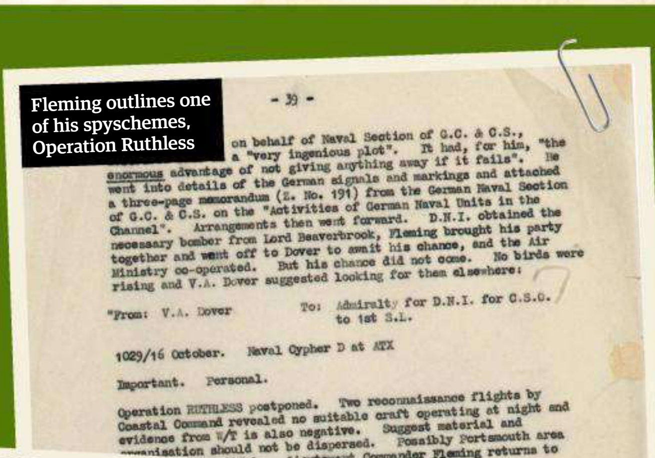
The James Bond creator enjoyed a distinguished career in military intelligence

As a journalist, Ian Fleming journeyed to Russia in 1939 to report on a trade deal, although his real mission was to ascertain Russia's military strength and morale ahead of what looked like certain war. When Britain did finally enter the conflict, Fleming was appointed as assistant to Rear-Admiral John Godfrey, the director of Naval Intelligence, and took up the position of lieutenant in the Special Branch of the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, a rank he was later to bestow on his famous literary creation, James Bond.

Fleming helped develop ties between the UK and US over the running of secret agents and was heavily involved in the formation of the 30 Assault Unit, a British commando group designed to support troops and glean vital information for the war effort. Among their greatest achievements were the capture of an Enigma machine – the key piece of German encryption equipment – and the seizure of the complete records of the German navy.

He is also widely credited as the author of the Trout Memo, which culminated in Operation Mincemeat, a deception to disguise the 1943 Allied invasion of Sicily. Mincemeat saw the body of a dead tramp dressed as a British officer, supplied with false papers, and dumped off the coast of Spain. It was washed up and intercepted by German agents.

Fleming's knowledge of secret operations found voice in the creation of the most famous fictional spy of all time, James Bond, who he cast as the hero of his 1953 novel *Casino Royale*. Fleming wrote a further 13 Bond books. The hero's name was taken from an ornithologist, though the likes of M and Q branch were drawn from his experiences in British intelligence. It is thought that the character of M was based on Fleming's boss, Rear-Admiral Godfrey.


Fleming outlines one of his spyschemes, Operation Ruthless

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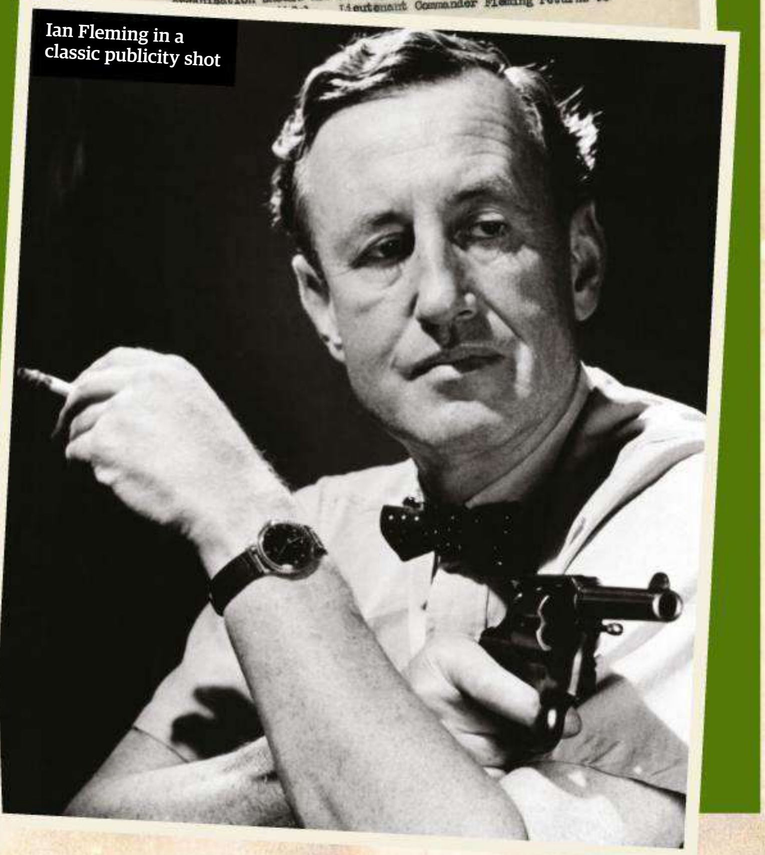
on behalf of Naval Section of G.C. & C.S.,
a "very ingenious plot". It had, for him, "the
enormous advantage of not giving anything away if it fails". He
went into details of the German signals and markings and attached
a three-page memorandum (Z. No. 191) from the German Naval Section
of G.C. & C.S. on the "Activities of German Naval Units in the
Channel". Arrangements then went forward. D.N.I. obtained the
necessary bomber from Lord Beaverbrook, Fleming brought his party
together and went off to Dover to await his chance, and the Air
Ministry co-operated. But his chance did not come. No birds were
rising and V.A. Dover suggested looking for them elsewhere:

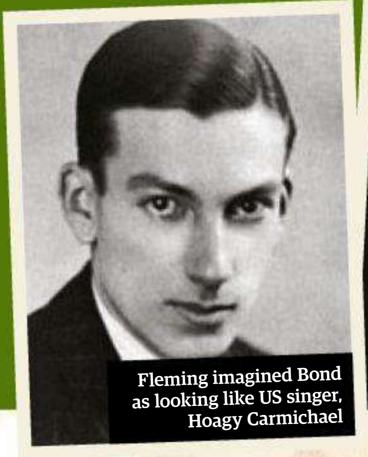
"From: V.A. Dover To: Admiralty for D.N.I. for C.S.O.
to 1st S.L.

1029/16 October. Naval Cypher D at ATX

Important. Personal.

Operation RUTHLESS postponed. Two reconnaissance flights by
Coastal Command revealed no suitable craft operating at night and
evidence from W/T is also negative. Suggest material and
organisation should not be dispersed. Possibly Portsmouth area
Lieutenant Commander Fleming returns to


Ian Fleming in a classic publicity shot


Fleming imagined Bond as looking like US singer, Hoagy Carmichael

ROGER LANDES

The betrayed agent who got his revenge

After working with Claude de Baissac, Roger Landes took over the Scientist network, though was forced to escape into Spain when betrayed by French Resistance leader André Grandclement. In the UK he was suspected of being a turncoat, though was found innocent and returned to France to help rebuild the network ahead of the D-Day operations. Once on the ground the Resistance leaders dispatched Grandclement and Landes was lumbered with the unenviable job of killing Grandclement's wife.

'TOMMY' YEO-THOMAS

The super-spy who inspired James Bond

Yeo-Thomas, who was code-named White Rabbit by the Gestapo, was parachuted into France three times before eventually being captured and tortured. He was taken to Buchenwald concentration camp but managed to escape. Once, while on a train in France, he engaged in conversation with Klaus Barbie, the notorious Nazi known as the 'Butcher of Lyon'. Like Bond, he is said to have employed a number of techniques to escape his enemies – including jumping from a train, strangling a guard, wearing disguises and riding in a hearse – and is also said to have been a hit with women. He went on to win the George Cross.

LEO MARKS

The SEO's chief cryptographer

Conscripted in January 1942, Marks trained as a cryptographer and went on to join the SOE (Special Operations Executive), rather than joining colleagues at Bletchley Park. He briefed a clutch of SOE agents sent into occupied Europe, including Noor Inayat-Khan as well as the Grouse/Swallow team of saboteurs sent to destroy Hitler's heavy water facility in Norway.

Marks recognised that there were some serious defects in the existing cipher system and so set about working with agents on memorising unpublished and memorable poems. He was also credited with reinventing the one-time pad, whereby agent and home office held the only two copies of pads of random letters used to communicate, which the agent destroyed after its initial use.

FRANCIS SUTTILL

The network mastermind betrayed at the last minute

Francis Suttill was chosen to establish and run the Prosper network based in Paris and his list of successful missions included the sabotage of the Chaingy power station, the destruction of 1,000 litres of petrol and a clutch of attacks on goods trains running the Orleans-Paris line. He also founded a safe house at the School of National Agriculture at Grignon, which has been cited as one of the most important SOE houses in France. The collapse of the Prosper network was a tragedy in which hundreds of SOE agents and Resistance fighters were swiftly betrayed and captured.

JOZEF GABČÍK & JAN KUBIŠ

The Czech soldiers who gave their life in Operation Anthropoid

These two soldiers in the Czechoslovak army-in-exile worked under SOE instruction in Operation Anthropoid, which led to the assassination of SS Obergruppenführer Reinhard Heydrich in Prague during May 1942. The mission was the only successful assassination of a senior Nazi officer during World War II, although it proved a pyrrhic victory, prompting terrible SS reprisals conducted against civilians in the region.

Jozef Gabčík and Jan Kubiš were among a number of troops parachuted into Czechoslovakia. They met with anti-Nazi sympathisers and, after planning and aborting a number of assassination missions, settled on an ambush of Heydrich's car. On the morning of 27 May, as Heydrich approached, Gabčík stepped in front of the car and opened fire with his British-issued Sten sub-machine gun, which jammed, allowing Heydrich to return fire with his pistol. Kubiš then launched an explosive at the car, fragments of which ripped through the bumper, embedding shrapnel in Heydrich's left-hand side. The gunfight continued before Gabčík and Kubiš made their escape.

The assassins presumed their attack had failed. Heydrich, however, succumbed to his wounds and died on 4 June. Hitler was absolutely furious at what had happened, and ordered immediate reprisals, which included the Lidice Massacre where a whole village was destroyed. Despite their brutal retaliation, the Nazis were unable to find the perpetrators until resistance fighter Karel Čurda turned himself in to the Gestapo and betrayed the team's local contacts. Following a vicious manhunt characterised by brutal Gestapo interrogation techniques, Kubiš, Gabčík and the other parachutists were eventually besieged in the Sts. Cyril and Methodius Cathedral in Prague. Here they died, either during the ferocious gunfight or via suicide as the Nazis closed in.

Jan Kubiš, whose explosive went on to kill Heydrich

Heydrich's Mercedes after the attack

AGENCY WORK

Discover the dizzying array of British intelligence organisations

MI9: Responsible for the interrogation of enemy prisoners of war until 1941, MI9 also assisted in the escape and evasion of Allied prisoners and the debriefing of those who successfully reached England. Further, MI9 communicated with prisoners who were still in captivity, sending them instructions and equipment through clandestine sources.

MI6: Also known as the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS), MI6 serves to this day as the primary foreign intelligence agency of the British government. During World War II, MI6 established covert operations offices in the United States, Canada, and elsewhere, conducting successful operations in all theatres of the conflict.

MI8: Serving as the signals intelligence section of the War Office, it was the responsibility of MI8 to establish and manage a worldwide network of radio transmission posts referred to as the 'Y Stations'. MI8 was responsible for communications security and for the Radio Security Service (RSS) for 18 months during 1939-1941, prior to the absorption of the RSS by MI6.

MI7: The genesis of British press and propaganda management occurred with MI7. At the outbreak of World War II, the section was reconstituted with primarily civilian personnel working as censors and propagandists. In the spring of 1940, most of the functions of MI7 were transferred to the British Ministry of Information.

MI5: Also called the Security Service, MI5 served as the domestic counterintelligence and security section of British Intelligence. During World War II, MI5, which remains active today, developed and administered the XX double agent programme and controlled the entry of foreign nationals to Britain through the London Reception Centre at the Royal Patriotic School.

MI10: Responsible for the analysis of various types of technical intelligence across the globe during World War II, MI10 regularly conducted evaluations of captured enemy weapons and a wide range of emerging technology as it was brought to Britain from the field. MI10 was eventually merged into the Government Communications Headquarters.

The modern MI6 Building in London; an iconic landmark in the spy world

NAVAL INTELLIGENCE DIVISION: Also known as Room 39, the Naval Intelligence Division (NID) was created in 1912. During World War II, NID handled naval Ultra transmission decrypts and fielded information-gathering operatives with its Commando 30 Assault Unit. NID officers were active in British warzones across the world and were present at Operations Tourch and Overlord.

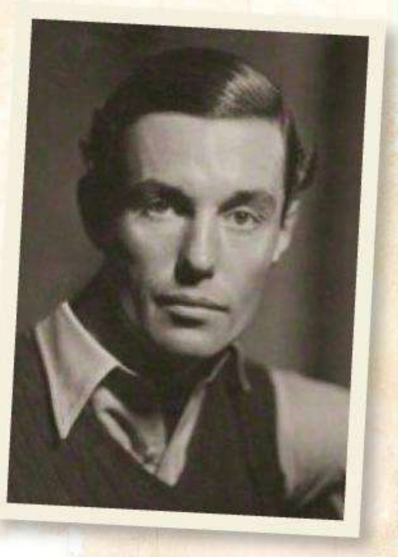
PETER FLEMING

The dashing writer and adventurer was a prime mover during the secret war in the East

The elder brother of Ian, the effortlessly glamorous Peter Fleming became a prominent figure in British intelligence, working with Colin Gubbins on the formation of the Auxiliary Units, who would fight a resistance war in the UK should the Germans complete a successful invasion. When Gubbins left to form the SOE, he took Fleming with him.

In April 1941, armed with a ton of explosives, £40,000 in notes and gold sovereigns and Italian pocket dictionaries, Fleming and a team of agents entered Northern Greece. They held a key valley in Macedonia, the Monastir Gap, against the might of the German army, before withdrawing and playing havoc with enemy communications, blowing up bridges and railways as they went. Fleming and his men also helped evacuate the British Vice Consul and diplomatic staff to Cairo.

His abilities saw him transferred to India and then Ceylon to head up D Division in charge of military deception operations in Southeast Asia. He played a prominent role in the British invasion of Burma – a territory that had been lost during the Japanese invasion of 1942 – planting information that claimed British forces in the region were much larger than they really were. In June 1945 his efforts were rewarded with an OBE.



NOOR INAYAT KHAN

A courageous spy princesses whose life ended in tragedy

Descended from Tipu Sultan, an 18th century ruler of Mysore, Inayat Khan joined the Women's Auxiliary Air Force — taking the name Nora Baker — before entering the SOE in February 1943. Despite reservations about her suitability for a secret agency role, she became the first female wireless operator sent to France and survived the collapse of the Prosper network.

Though ordered to leave by Colonel Maurice Buckmaster, head of SOE's French operations, she bravely stayed on and, with all the Prospect leaders in captivity, became the single most important SOE asset in the entire region as she continued to transmit information back to England. Unfortunately, in October 1943 the Gestapo captured her after she was betrayed by a double agent. She twice escaped her captors only to be retaken immediately, and when she was transferred to a prison at Pforzheim she is said to have been perpetually chained in a crouching position.

She was moved to the death camp at Dachau and executed in July 1944. An unnamed guard gave a description of the death of a woman who is thought to be Inayat Khan, and its content is extremely upsetting. She was awarded the George Cross in 1949.

ALAN TURING

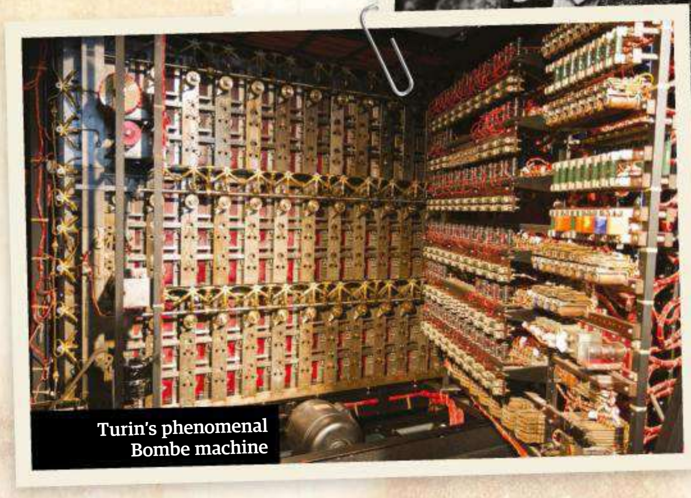
The mathematical genius who helped crack the Enigma code

Alan Turing was a brilliant mathematician born in London. He studied at both Cambridge and Princeton universities before going on to work for the British Code and Cypher School even before WWII. Once war was declared, Turing took up a full-time role at Bletchley Park in Buckinghamshire where he worked diligently to decipher the military codes used by Germany and its allies, his primary efforts aimed at cracking the Enigma code.

The Enigma was the German armed forces' enciphering machine used to send messages securely. Polish mathematicians had cracked the original codes but the Germans increased Enigma security by changing the cipher system on a daily basis. Along with fellow code-breaker Gordon Welchman, Turing developed a machine known as the Bombe, which replicated the action of several Enigma machines wired together and significantly reduced the work of the code-breakers. From mid-1940, the team at Bletchley Park was regularly reading German Air Force signals.

It was a different matter in the Battle of the Atlantic, however, a crucial theatre of conflict. Here, given the German Navy's greater cipher discipline, messages relayed back and forth between the Kriegsmarine and German U-boats had flummoxed the code-breakers at Bletchley. The Allies struck gold, however, with the capture of U-110, which provided them with an intact naval Enigma machine. This was soon dispatched to Turing and the other boffins at Bletchley who got to work. Their efforts were further boosted by the fact that the German high command believed the codes used in the naval communication were inviolable, and soon the Allied convoys were perpetually dodging the U-boat wolfpacks.

The Germans' inclusion of a fourth rotor in the Enigma was a setback, and the U-boats once again enjoyed a 'happy time' during 1942 when they terrorised the Atlantic convoys. Turing, however, eventually cracked this problem, too. The battle to break German ciphers was perennial and Turing proved a key asset for the Allies. His work was memorialised in the 2014 film *The Imitation Game*.



Turin's phenomenal Bombe machine

TOR GLAD

Norwegian worked as a double agent in tandem with John Moe

Tor Glad, a Norwegian citizen, came ashore in Scotland with John Moe and turned double agent under the MI5 XX programme. Glad participated in staged sabotage operations and transmitted false radio broadcasts that convinced the Germans that the Allies planned to invade Norway prior to the actual invasion of North Africa in 1942. The Germans were compelled to station more than 300,000 troops in Norway to defend against an invasion that never came. Moe and Glad were nicknamed Mutt and Jeff for their resemblance to popular cartoon characters of the period. British handlers came to doubt Glad's continuing value and eventually interned him in 1943.

ROMAN CZERNIAWSKI

Polish double agent fed false D-Day information to the Germans

Once associated with French double agent Mathilde Carré in the failed Interallie Resistance network, Czerniawski escaped to Britain and was heavily scrutinised by Polish Intelligence. Both MI6 and MI5 questioned him, and the British turned him under the MI5 XX programme. With the code name 'Brutus', Czerniawski passed false information to the Germans; however, his strong anti-Soviet sentiment concerned the British that German authorities had become suspicious. But by the end of 1943, the British deemed Czerniawski safely operational. He then transmitted false information prior to D-Day under Operation Fortitude, helping convince the Germans that the invasion of Europe would take place in the Pas-de-Calais.

JUAN PUJOL GARCÍA

Catalan double agent played a pivotal role in D-Day deceptions

Juan Pujol García, code-named Garbo, offered his services to German intelligence before joining the British and working with MI6 as a double agent. Together with Tommy Harris, he created a network of 27 imaginary sub-agents through whom he provided misinformation to the Germans during Operation Fortitude, which aimed to disguise the location of the D-Day landings. In one key transmission, Pujol deceived the Germans so completely that they kept two armoured divisions and 19 infantry divisions in the Pas-de-Calais in anticipation of an invasion. This gave the Allies time to establish their bridgehead. He was awarded both the Iron Cross and an MBE.

CLAUDE DE BAISSAC

A key player in France's Scientist network

Mauritian Claude de Baissac, the brother of fellow SOE operative Lise de Baissac, parachuted into France on 30 July 1942 with Harry Peulevé and helped form the Scientist network in the Bordeaux area. Among their operations they attacked the local U-boat pens. During the assault phase of Operation Overlord in early June 1944, the head of SOE operations in France sent De Baissac back to the Normandy region to re-found Scientist and he worked on the army's flanks providing tactical intelligence. His bravado is recorded in one episode where he received an SAS captain on the upper storey of a house that had a German HQ on the ground floor.

NANCY GRACE AUGUSTA WAKE

Her life in jeopardy, the Nazis' most wanted agent survived the war

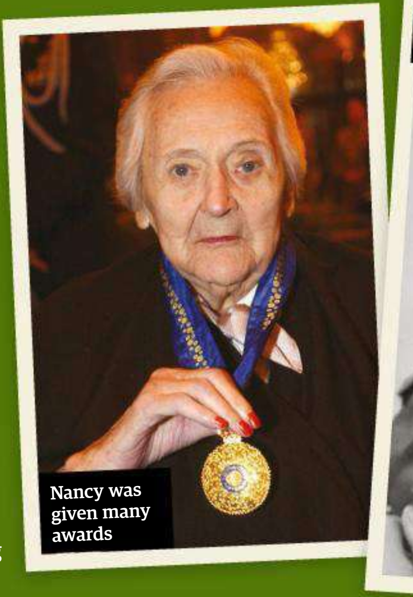
The most decorated female in Allied service during World War II, Nancy Wake was continually in danger in Nazi-occupied France. Undeterred, she risked her life initially as a courier for the French Resistance. She remained elusive, the Gestapo deeming her its most wanted enemy spy, nicknaming her the 'White Mouse', and placing a bounty of 5 million francs on her head.

Wake's determination to thwart the Nazis grew from first-hand experience. Born in New Zealand, she moved with her family to Australia, ran away from home at 16, and made her way to New York City and London. She worked briefly as a nurse while learning the craft of journalism. During the 1930s she took a job as a European correspondent with Hearst Newspapers, witnessing the brutality of the Nazi rise to power.

With the outbreak of World War II, Nancy joined the French Resistance. When the network she served was compromised, she was arrested but released when the Germans believed a friend's concocted story of the supposed infidelity of her husband, Henri Fiocca. After several attempts, she reached London and volunteered for the SOE. Fiocca chose to remain in France. He fell into the hands of the Gestapo and was tortured to death without revealing Nancy's whereabouts.

On the night of 29 April 1944, Wake parachuted into France and joined the band of Maquis fighters led by Captain Henri Tardivat in the Troncais Forest. She trained Maquis recruits and once rode a bicycle more than 500 kilometres to deliver a top-secret codebook. During one raid she silenced a German sentry, delivering a fatal judo chop with her bare hands.

Wake survived the war, receiving the George Medal, The US Medal of Freedom, the French Croix de Guerre, and other decorations for valour. She died in London in 2011 at age 98.


Nancy was given many awards

Nancy was determined to have a role in the war

> “SHE ONCE RODE A BICYCLE MORE THAN 500KM TO DELIVER A NOTEBOOK”

MERLIN MINSHALL

Serving with Ian Fleming in Naval Intelligence brought new adventure

Merlin Minshall was an adventurer. After graduating from London University, he set out in 1931 to become the first Englishman to sail across Europe to the Black Sea. An avid auto racer, he won the Italian Foreign Challenge in 1937 where Fascist dictator Benito Mussolini presented the trophy. Minshall later became first to drive an auto with an air-cooled engine across the Sahara.

With the outbreak of war in 1939, Minshall reported for duty with the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve where he served under Ian Fleming for a time. In 1940, he participated in a failed plan to block the Danube River with barges to impede the flow of oil to Germany and led Operation Shamrock, a joint Naval Intelligence-SOE mission monitoring German U-boat traffic along coastal France. In 1941, he assisted the hunt for the German battleship Bismarck while commanding a section at HMS Flowerdown, a Sussex wireless station, and served in the Pacific.

Minshall initially denied that Fleming had modelled James Bond after him but later went on to embrace the idea. Married four times, Minshall died aged 80 in 1987.

JOHN MOE

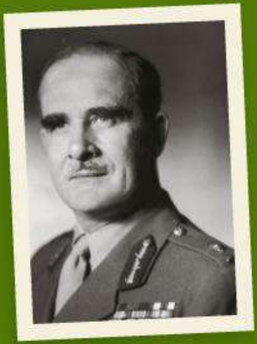
Dual citizen of Britain and Norway fed false information to the Nazis

Along with his companion Tor Glad, John Moe landed at Crovie on Scotland's Moray Firth, on 7 April 1941. The duo had been recruited by the German Abwehr to operate in Britain and commit acts of sabotage; however, they immediately approached local authorities and were interrogated by MI5 and MI6. Both were turned under the MI5 XX programme as double agents, committing staged acts of sabotage against worthless targets with explosives supplied by the Germans. Nicknamed Mutt and Jeff, they fed false information to the Abwehr by radio before the Allied invasion of North Africa, prompting Germany to keep thousands of troops in Scandinavia.

Double agents Moe and Glad helped to divert thousands of Nazis away from the fight

COLIN GUBBINS

The disciplined and dapper Scotsman who headed up the Special Operations Executive



The prime mover in the Special Operations Executive (SOE), this energetic Scotsman served with distinction in the Royal Artillery during WWI before going on to fight in Russia for the White Army and then to Ireland, where he fought in the Anglo-Irish War of 1919-21. His experiences in these two arenas gave him a keen insight into guerrilla warfare and he went on to author a number of training manuals, such as 1939's *Partisan Leader's Handbook*, which outlined the principles of sabotage and guerrilla warfare, for British Military Intelligence.

He worked on establishing the Auxiliary Units, who would fight a resistance war in the UK should the Germans complete a successful invasion, before he was invited to oversee the SOE. He took the codename M (a moniker borrowed by Fleming when he wrote his James Bond novels). Under his guidance, SOE formed separate sections to co-ordinate activities in specific countries, with the greatest concentration focusing on France. The SOE enjoyed many successes and endured many failures, including a disastrous campaign in the Netherlands that cost many agents' lives.

As the head of SOE, Gubbins co-ordinated the activities of resistance movements across the globe and Gubbins consulted with the Foreign Office, the chiefs of staff, representatives of the resistance organisations, governments-in-exile, and other agencies including his counterparts in the American Office of Strategic Services (OSS).

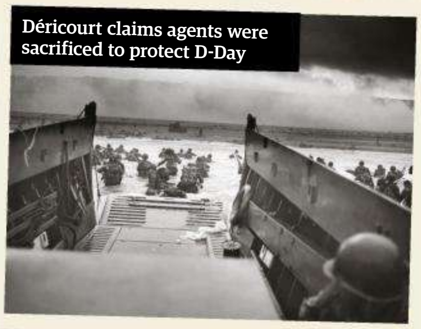
HENRI DÉRICOURT

The inscrutable Frenchman's history remains a mystery to this day

After escaping to Britain in August 1942, Frenchman Henri Déricourt joined the SOE and was parachuted back into his native land in January of the following year. He worked mainly for the Prosper network and arranged the transportation of over 60 SOE agents including Noor Inayat Khan, Vera Leigh, Yolande Beekman, Eliane Plewman, Diana Rowden, Jack Agazarian, Francis Suttill, Pearl Witherington and Lise de Baissac.

When the Prosper network was compromised, the likes of Agazarian and Suttill believed Déricourt might have been working against them as a double agent. In the aftermath of WWII, evidence emerged that Déricourt was guilty of providing information to the Gestapo that led to the arrest and execution of several agents including Inayat Khan, Agazarian and Suttill, among others. When interviewed for the book *Double Agent*, Déricourt claimed that the SEO had used him as a triple agent. Aware that the Gestapo had compromised the Prosper network, he said, the SEO deliberately sacrificed key agents in a bid to divert Nazi attention from Operation Overlord and the D-Day landings in Normandy in Operation Neptune.

Déricourt was reportedly killed in an air crash over Laos in November 1962. His body was never found, however, and suggestions abound that his death was faked so that he might live a new life under an assumed name.



Déricourt claims agents were sacrificed to protect D-Day

EDDIE MYERS

Engineer who sabotaged the Gorgopotamos viaduct

Lieutenant-Colonel Eddie Myers was the commanding officer on Operation Harling, an SOE mission held in conjunction with Greek Resistance groups, which aimed to destroy the viaduct and thereby hamper Field Marshal Erwin Rommel's supply route to north Africa. The sabotage was a success and proved that guerrillas working in conjunction with Allied officers could achieve spectacular results in occupied Europe. Myers remained on the ground, building his own guerrilla network, whose further successes included the destruction of the Asopos viaduct.

JACK AGAZARIAN

The selfless spy who made the ultimate sacrifice

RAF officer Jack Agazarian more than proved his mettle when he decided to return to France for a second mission in July 1943, even though the Gestapo knew who he was from his time with the Physician network. His bravery was further amplified when he stood in for his commanding officer, Nicholas Bodington, at a meeting that they felt might end up being a trap. It was, and Agazarian was arrested and subsequently killed. His wife also worked for SOE's F Section.

VIOLETTE SZABO

The brave agent who avenged her husband

Born Violette Bushell, Szabo joined the SOE in July 1943 following the death of her husband, Etienne Szabo, at the great tank battle of El Alamein. Her first mission, which she completed, was to check whether one of the Prosper network sub-chains had been compromised. She was then parachuted back into France in early June 1944, just two days after D-Day with the intention of disrupting German communications.

Shortly after landing, when in the company of French Resistance fighter Jacques Dufour and Jean Bariaud, her car ran into a German roadblock and she and Dufour laid down covering fire while the unarmed Bariaud escaped. Szabo and Dufour retreated towards a wood, exchanging fire with pursuing enemy troops. Szabo had an ankle injury and in the chase it gave way, forcing her to a standstill. She continued the firefight in a bid to let Dufour get away. She was captured and taken to the Ravensbrück, a concentration camp for women. She was executed in February 1945.

Her bravery saw her become the second woman to win the George Cross, her citation stating that while she was brutally tortured, she never surrendered any significant information. Her exploits are remembered in the book and the 1958 film, *Carve Her Name With Pride.*

MARIAN REJEWSKI

The Polish mathematician who reconstructed the Enigma cipher machine

Significant early success in solving the cryptologic riddle of the German Enigma cipher machine was accomplished by a trio of Polish mathematicians in the 1930s. Marian Rejewski, Henryk Zygalski, and Jerzy Różycki collaborated in the effort, and Rejewski actually made an Enigma machine in 1932 without previously having seen one.

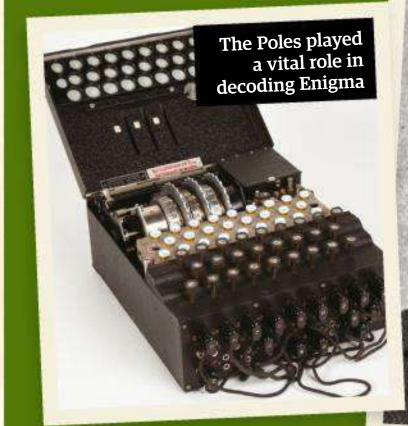
Rejewski was born in 1905 in Bromberg, at that time part of the German Empire. He attended Poznan University during the 1920s, and while Polish cryptanalysts had worked on Enigma for a time, their success had been limited. In the autumn of 1932, the task was handed to Rejewski.

Rejewski had only a general understanding of how the machine's system of rotors functioned and received some assistance from French sources. Within just a matter of days, he managed to untangle the labyrinth of internal wiring that made the Enigma a revolutionary encoding machine with millions of possible letter combinations. The Poles subsequently went on to pioneer invaluable techniques for cracking Enigma decryptions.

Weeks before the German invasion of Poland that started World War II, the Polish mathematicians met at Pyry, south of Warsaw, with British and French intelligence officers, revealing their successes. For British Intelligence, the progress of the Poles offered a great leap forward, allowing them to begin reading decrypted Enigma messages, dubbed Ultra, within months.

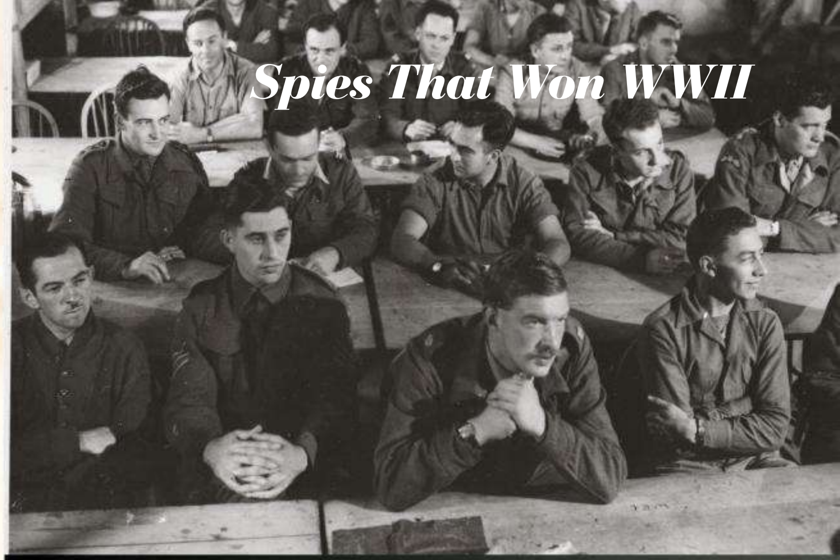
The Poles continued working in France until late 1942. Rejewski and Zygalski escaped to England the following summer and were enlisted in the Polish Army, cracking other German codes.

Meanwhile, British and American cryptanalysts had taken the lead in the decryption of Enigma transmissions. The Poles, who had provided vital assistance, were excluded from further participation. Their role remained obscure for some time. Rejewski died in 1980, aged 78. Twenty years later, he was awarded the Grand Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta, Poland's highest civilian decoration.



The Poles played a vital role in decoding Enigma

“REJEWSKI MADE AN ENIGMA MACHINE”



SCHOOL FOR SCOUNDRALS

A step-by-step guide to the training of Special Operations Executive hopefuls

1. INTRODUCTORY COURSE

Those thought suitable for a role in the SOE were sent first on a two- or three-week course, where they would engage in physical fitness exercises, basic map reading and weapons work, though the recruits were not told that they were testing for the SOE. There was also said to be a well-stocked bar to see how potential agents might behave when alcohol was liberally poured.

2. GROUP A TRAINING

Those that passed the initial course were sent for a three- or four-week course in paramilitary techniques up in Scotland, most famously at Arisaig. Here they learned about small arms, as well taking lessons in unarmed combat (developed by former Shanghai police officers Sykes and Fairbairn), sabotage and demolition, intensive map reading and basic infantry tactical training.

3. GROUP B TRAINING

It was likely that the first two courses might wheedle out around 60 per cent of candidates, the remainder passing on to Group B training in the country houses around Beaulieu and the New Forest. Here they learned defensive lessons – about enemy police services and how to respond to their lines of questioning. They were also taught how to live their cover with conviction.

4. GROUP B TESTING

During the Group B work, recruits were also given lessons in intelligence gathering and reporting their findings back to England via elementary coding before they took a practical passing-out test that lasted several days. Recruits were sent off in small groups with a specific mission – sabotage, theft of a Sten gun etc – which might also require them picking up an accomplice along the way.

5. PARACHUTE TRAINING

Once recruits graduated from Beaulieu they were sent for more technical training, including parachuting for those to be dropped overseas. This was taught from a merchant's house near Manchester. Drops were made into the grounds at Tatton Park from Whitley aircraft. The drop suits were developed with pockets for a spade, so the agents could bury the parachute on landing.

6. SPECIALIST TRAINING

There were a number of specialist courses for graduates, like the wireless school at Thame Park. There were courses in safe-breaking and clandestine printing as well as advanced sabotage techniques. Of those who failed the early courses, meanwhile, many were sent to the 'cooler' at Inverlair, where they were encouraged to forget the little they had learned about secret operations.

EINAR SKINNARLAND

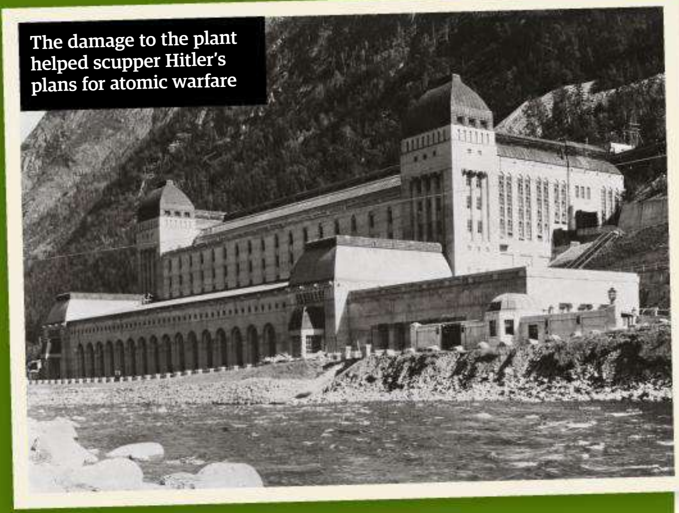
The Norwegian nationalist who helped thwart Hitler's atomic ambitions

When an SOE raiding party captured a Norwegian ship in March 1942, they discovered on board Einar Skinnarland, who was eager to help fight the German invaders in his homeland. He heralded from Rjukan, which was close to Vemok, home to Norsk Hydro, where the Germans were bidding to propel their atomic bomb development with the use of heavy water (deuterium oxide). A mission to destroy the plant passed to the SOE who parachuted Skinnarland back into Norway and there he befriended the chief engineer at the plant, learned plenty of information necessary for a coup de main operation, and relayed this by radio to the SOE.

On the ground, he then received a number of operatives who were to help with the landing of two British gliders carrying commando-engineers set to implement Operation Freshman. Sadly, both gliders crashed in bad weather and the survivors were captured, tortured and executed by the Gestapo. Security at the plant was beefed up.

Undeterred, Skinnarland and the SOE tried again and with Operation Gunnerside on 28/29 February 1943, they achieved their aim, Skinnarland helping commandoes to sneak into the plant and set charges. The saboteurs only met one worker during the operation. He agreed to help, providing he was allowed to retrieve his eyeglasses! The explosion severely damaged the plant and wreaked havoc with Hitler's atomic ambitions. It is said that 3,000 German soldiers were dispatched to comb the area for the commandos, all of whom escaped, with four remaining in the region for further work with the Resistance.

The story was immortalised in the 1948 Franco-Norwegian film *Operation Swallow: The Battle For Heavy Water* and then the 1965 Kirk Douglas film *The Heroes Of Telemark*. Skinnarland continued to maintain radio contact between the local elements of the Norwegian resistance and SOE headquarters in London until the end of the war.



The damage to the plant helped scupper Hitler's plans for atomic warfare

DEUTERIUM OXY
NORSK HYDRO

A vial of deuterium oxide, a vital component of the Nazi's atomic bomb ambitions

HENRYK ZYGALSKI

The Polish cryptologist who helped crack Enigma

One of a trio of Polish mathematicians who performed early cryptanalytic work on Enigma encoded German ciphers, Zygalski developed perforated sheets, later known as 'Zygalski sheets,' as keys to a manual method of determining settings of Enigma machine rotors. In 1939, Zygalski participated in a pivotal meeting near Warsaw with representatives of the British and French intelligence communities, revealing the substantial progress the Poles had made in cracking Enigma. Along with fellow Pole Marian Rejewski, Zygalski reached England in the summer of 1943. He joined the Polish Army and worked on other ciphers but was excluded from further involvement in Enigma.

EDDIE CHAPMAN

The criminal turned agent who won the Iron Cross

Eddie Chapman's release from prison in Jersey saw him emerge into an occupied land and he immediately offered his services to the German secret service, the Abwehr. He agreed to sabotage the De Havilland factory but on his return to the UK turned himself in and worked as a double agent, code-named ZigZag. With help from MI5 he faked the bombing of the factory before returning to Germany and may have been the only British citizen to earn an Iron Cross.

KIM PHILBY

The most notorious member of the Cambridge Five

Britain ran an excellent double-cross network but was not immune from the same treatment. Appointed to MI6 in 1940 Philby passed more than 1,000 secret documents to the Soviet Union. Notorious for his actions after World War II, in a perverse way his perfidy helped secure the allied war effort, convincing Stalin that Japan had no designs on the USSR and letting them concentrate their forces on the Eastern Front.

RONALD SETH

A double agent whose fantastic stories baffled friends and foes alike

After teaching in Tallinn, the capital of Estonia, Ronald Seth volunteered to join the SOE in a bid to stir up revolt against the Nazis in the Baltic States. He was codenamed Blunderhead and in October 1942, parachuted into Estonia. Nothing more was heard from him until the April of the following year when a file fell into Allied hands detailing the capture and interrogation of a British spy called Ronald Seth who had, apparently, revealed everything about his SOE training and mission. The SOE's signal office was ordered to desist from listening out for any further contact.

Not long after the liberation of Paris, however, a document was passed to the War Office purporting to be from Blunderhead. It outlined a fantastic tale, recording how his initial landing had dropped him amid a group of German soldiers, whom he'd fought off before executing a sabotage campaign while living off the land. He was eventually captured and tortured, he said, and claimed that he agreed to help the Germans against the Russians.

His report revealed how he had worked in Paris and undergone training with the German secret service, Abwehr, although when the enemy lost confidence with him he was sent to a POW camp to serve as an informer. He maintained that all the while he was still serving the SOE. The intrigue was enhanced when another letter appeared a short while later claiming that he was now operating in a POW camp at Limburg under the name of Captain John De Witt.

Finally, in April 1945 as the war was coming to an end, he walked into the British legation in Bern, and said that he was carrying peace proposals from Himmler and should therefore be flown home. MI5 interrogated him at length and were unable to unpick the fact from fiction. Whatever its veracity, Blunderhead's story remains one of the most fantastic ever linked to an SOE agent.

Ethnic Germans in Tallinn cheer the arrival of the Wehrmacht and the retreat of the Red Army

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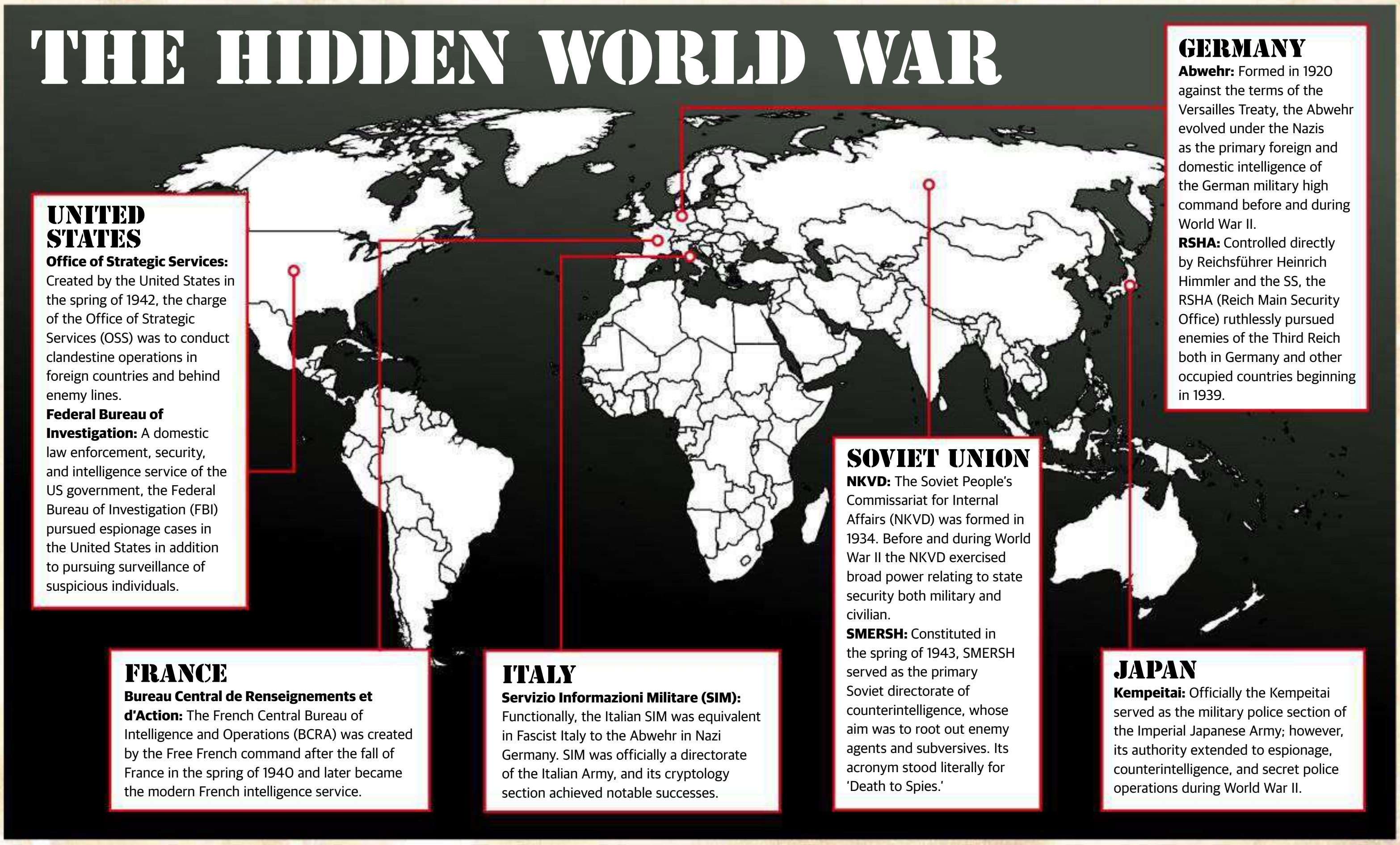
“HE MAINTAINED… HE WAS STILL SERVING SOE”

THE HIDDEN WORLD WAR



GERMANY

Abwehr: Formed in 1920 against the terms of the Versailles Treaty, the Abwehr evolved under the Nazis as the primary foreign and domestic intelligence of the German military high command before and during World War II.

RSHA: Controlled directly by Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler and the SS, the RSHA (Reich Main Security Office) ruthlessly pursued enemies of the Third Reich both in Germany and other occupied countries beginning in 1939.

UNITED STATES

Office of Strategic Services: Created by the United States in the spring of 1942, the charge of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) was to conduct clandestine operations in foreign countries and behind enemy lines.

Federal Bureau of Investigation: A domestic law enforcement, security, and intelligence service of the US government, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) pursued espionage cases in the United States in addition to pursuing surveillance of suspicious individuals.

SOVIET UNION

NKVD: The Soviet People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD) was formed in 1934. Before and during World War II the NKVD exercised broad power relating to state security both military and civilian.

SMERSH: Constituted in the spring of 1943, SMERSH served as the primary Soviet directorate of counterintelligence, whose aim was to root out enemy agents and subversives. Its acronym stood literally for 'Death to Spies.'

FRANCE

Bureau Central de Renseignements et d'Action: The French Central Bureau of Intelligence and Operations (BCRA) was created by the Free French command after the fall of France in the spring of 1940 and later became the modern French intelligence service.

ITALY

Servizio Informazioni Militare (SIM): Functionally, the Italian SIM was equivalent in Fascist Italy to the Abwehr in Nazi Germany. SIM was officially a directorate of the Italian Army, and its cryptology section achieved notable successes.

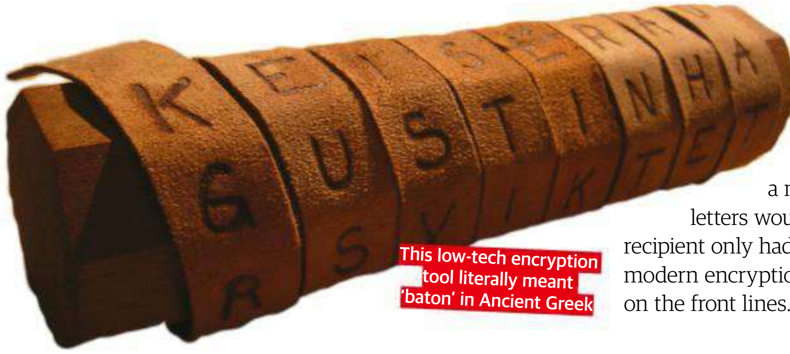
JAPAN

Kempeitai: Officially the Kempeitai served as the military police section of the Imperial Japanese Army; however, its authority extended to espionage, counterintelligence, and secret police operations during World War II.

Through History

SPY GADGETS

Long before James Bond graced at our screens, real-life 007s have been using secret weapons to communicate covertly and fight hidden wars



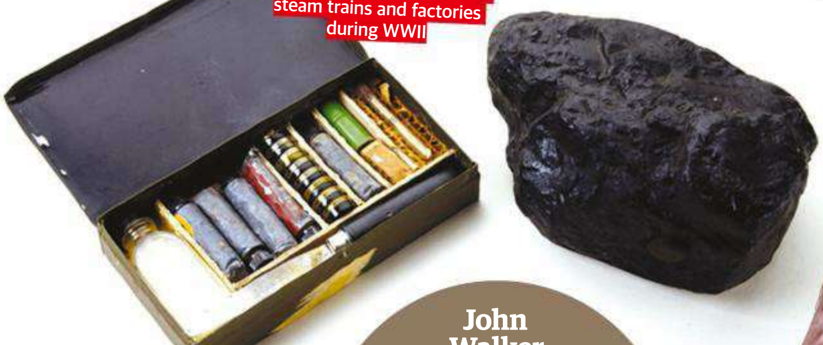
This low-tech encryption tool literally meant 'baton' in Ancient Greek

SCYTALE 400 BCE

Pronounced like a rhyme for 'Italy,' a scytale was a baton that Spartan military commanders used to send secret messages during battle. Writing a message onto a strip of parchment or leather wound around the scytale, the letters would appear scrambled when unwrapped from the rod. To decipher the code, the recipient only had to wrap the message around their own same-sized scytale. Though crude by modern encryption standards, the scytale could be used quickly without making mistakes, even on the front lines. However, the wooden rod was just as likely to be snapped in the heat of battle.

COAL TORPEDO 1864

Like the Confederacy's own improvised explosive device, the coal torpedo was used to blow up Unionist steam ships during the American Civil War. A hollow casting filled with explosives and covered in coal dust, Confederate agents would hide the bombs among Union coal piles. When shovelled into a ship's firebox, the resulting explosion could cripple the engine, or even kill crewmen and passengers, start a fire, or sink the vessel. The device is thought to have brought down a number of ships, though documents confirming the attacks were burned during the last days of the war.

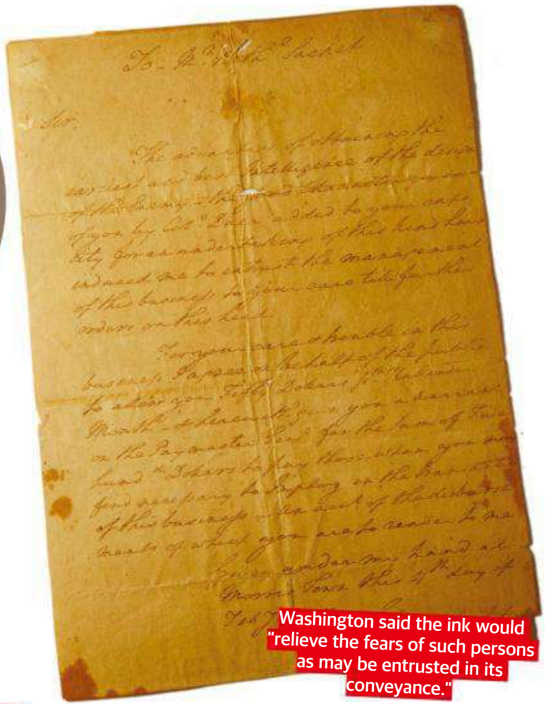


British agents used similar coal bombs to blow up Nazi steam trains and factories during WWII

Dr James Jay

1732-1815, AMERICAN

This physician from a prominent New York family developed an invisible ink that allowed George Washington and his revolutionaries to communicate during the War of Independence. However, Jay later joined the Loyalists and was exiled to England, while his brother, John Jay, became the US' first chief justice.



Washington said the ink would "relieve the fears of such persons as may be entrusted in its conveyance."

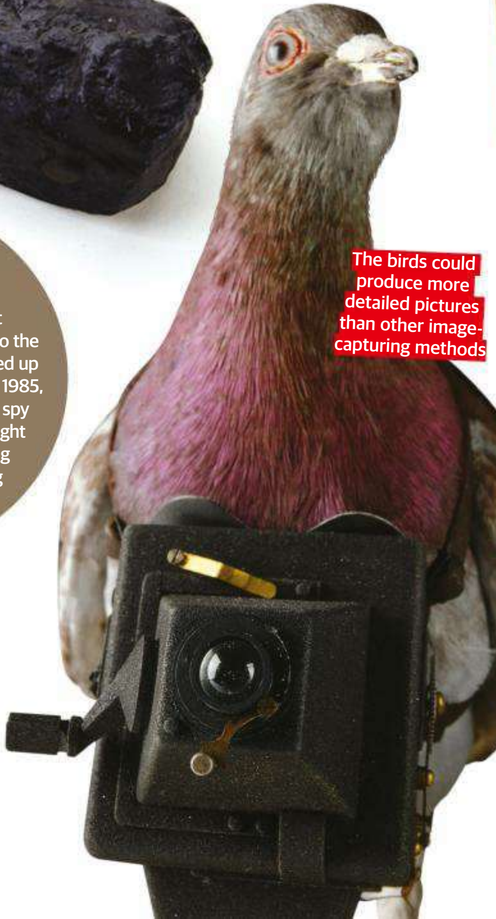
John Walker

1937-2014, AMERICAN

This former US Navy warrant officer initially sold secret codes to the Soviets to pay off debts, but ended up working for the KGB from 1967 to 1985, recruiting his own family into his spy ring. Ironically when he was caught by the FBI, Walker was working as a private detective, finding listening devices for clients.

PIGEON CAMERA 1917

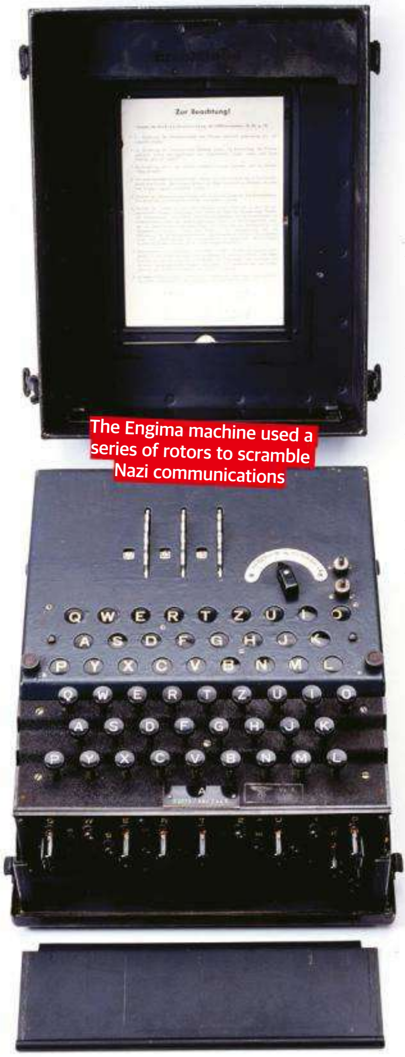
As far back as Ancient Rome, carrier pigeons have been used as military messengers. But during World War I, both sides used pigeons as spy satellites. The pigeons were fitted with cameras, which clicked away as they flew, snapping aerial shots of military sites. The pictures were then developed and used to study enemy weapons and fortifications. Though soldiers would often try and shoot enemy war pigeons down to intercept messages, until the 1950s the birds had a 95 per cent success rate and were decorated with medals for their service.



The birds could produce more detailed pictures than other image-capturing methods

SYMPATHETIC STAIN 1778

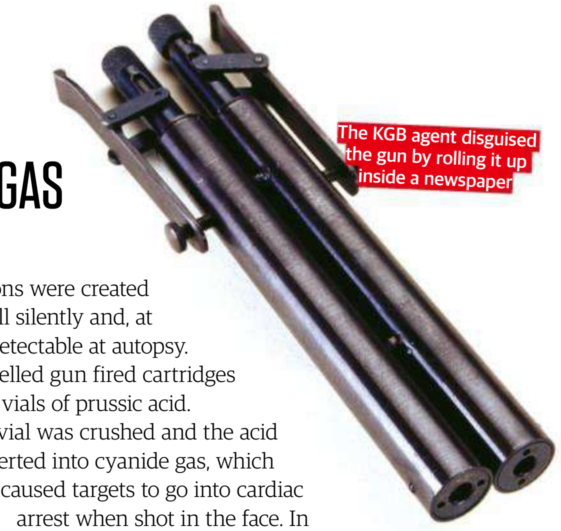
During the War of Independence, American revolutionaries communicated using an invisible ink George Washington called 'the sympathetic stain.' This required one chemical for writing the message, plus a second to develop it for added security. The secret solution was created by Dr James Jay, who used the ink to smuggle military intelligence from London to America. He wrote this top-secret information at the bottom of short, friendly letters to his brother, John Jay, who was one of Washington's revolutionary Patriots. James later supplied quantities of the ink to Washington and Silas Deane, a revolutionary agent working out of France.



The Engima machine used a series of rotors to scramble Nazi communications

ENIGMA MACHINE 1923

One of the most iconic examples of spook hardware, the Enigma cipher machine was a device for sending coded messages. The Nazi military famously used it during World War II to encrypt radio communications, such as troop positions. However, in 1943, the first computing machine in the world, the Colossus I, created in secret by British code-breakers working at Bletchley Park, including engineer Tony Flowers and mathematician Alan Turing, finally cracked it. It has been claimed that as a result of the information gained through this device, hostilities between Germany and the Allied forces were shortened by two years.



The KGB agent disguised the gun by rolling it up inside a newspaper

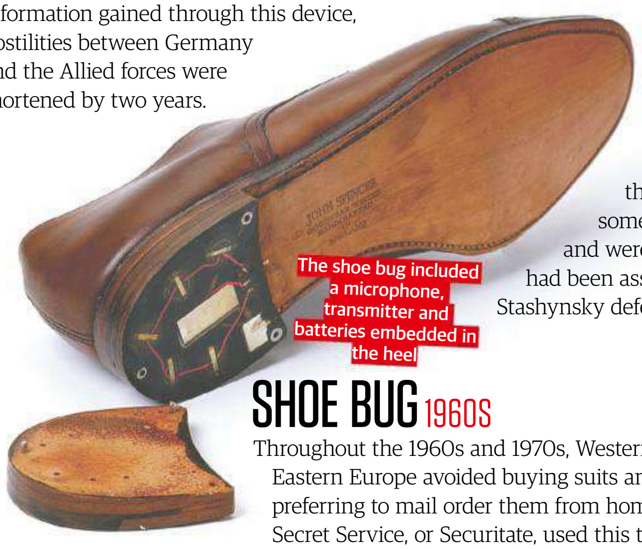
M44 CYANIDE GAS GUN 1950S

Gas-firing weapons were created by the KGB to kill silently and, at the time, be undetectable at autopsy. This double-barrelled gun fired cartridges containing glass vials of prussic acid. When fired, the vial was crushed and the acid converted into cyanide gas, which caused targets to go into cardiac arrest when shot in the face. In 1957, KGB agent Bohdan Stashynsky used the gun to kill Ukrainian dissidents Lev Rebet in 1957 and Stepan Bandera in 1959. Though the CIA suspected Bandera had been poisoned, they thought it had been by someone close to him and were unaware Rebet had been assassinated until Stashynsky defected.

Bohdan Stashynsky

1931, POLISH

This former KGB assassin was specially trained to use a cyanide gas gun, which could kill a target without detection. It was so effective, the CIA had no idea the weapon existed until Stashynsky told them about it when he defected to start a new life with his East Berlin wife.



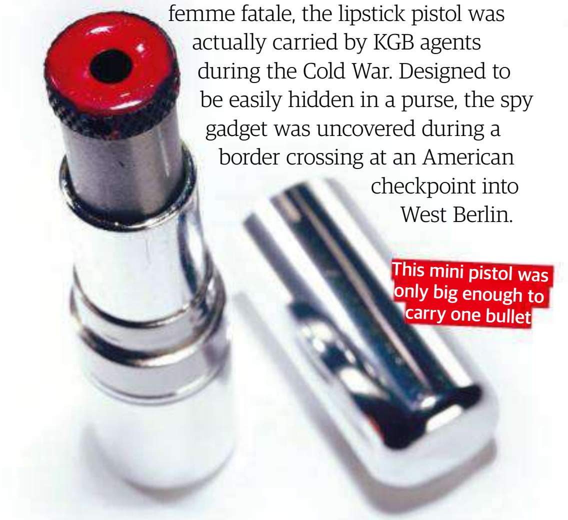
The shoe bug included a microphone, transmitter and batteries embedded in the heel

SHOE BUG 1960S

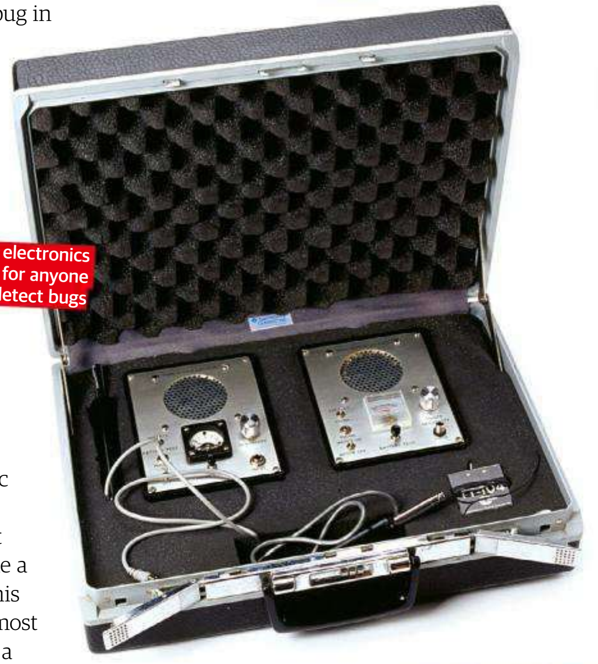
Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Western diplomats in Eastern Europe avoided buying suits and shoes locally, preferring to mail order them from home. The Romanian Secret Service, or Securitate, used this to their advantage, working with the postal service to install a bug in the shoe's heel, turning the diplomat into a walking radio station. Around the same time, the KGB would have maids and valets fit transmitters into their employer's shoes. The transmitter wouldn't be detected during an electronic sweep of the diplomat's office for bugs unless the official was in the room at the time the sweep occurred.

LIPSTICK PISTOL 1965

This tube of lipstick disguised a 4.5mm single shot firearm. Looking like something straight out of a *James Bond* movie, this weapon even had a pithy codename: 'The Kiss of Death'. However, rather than being used on-screen against 007 by a SPECTRE femme fatale, the lipstick pistol was actually carried by KGB agents during the Cold War. Designed to be easily hidden in a purse, the spy gadget was uncovered during a border crossing at an American checkpoint into West Berlin.



This mini pistol was only big enough to carry one bullet



Mass market electronics made it easy for anyone to hide and detect bugs

ELECTRONIC COUNTERMEASURE KIT 1980

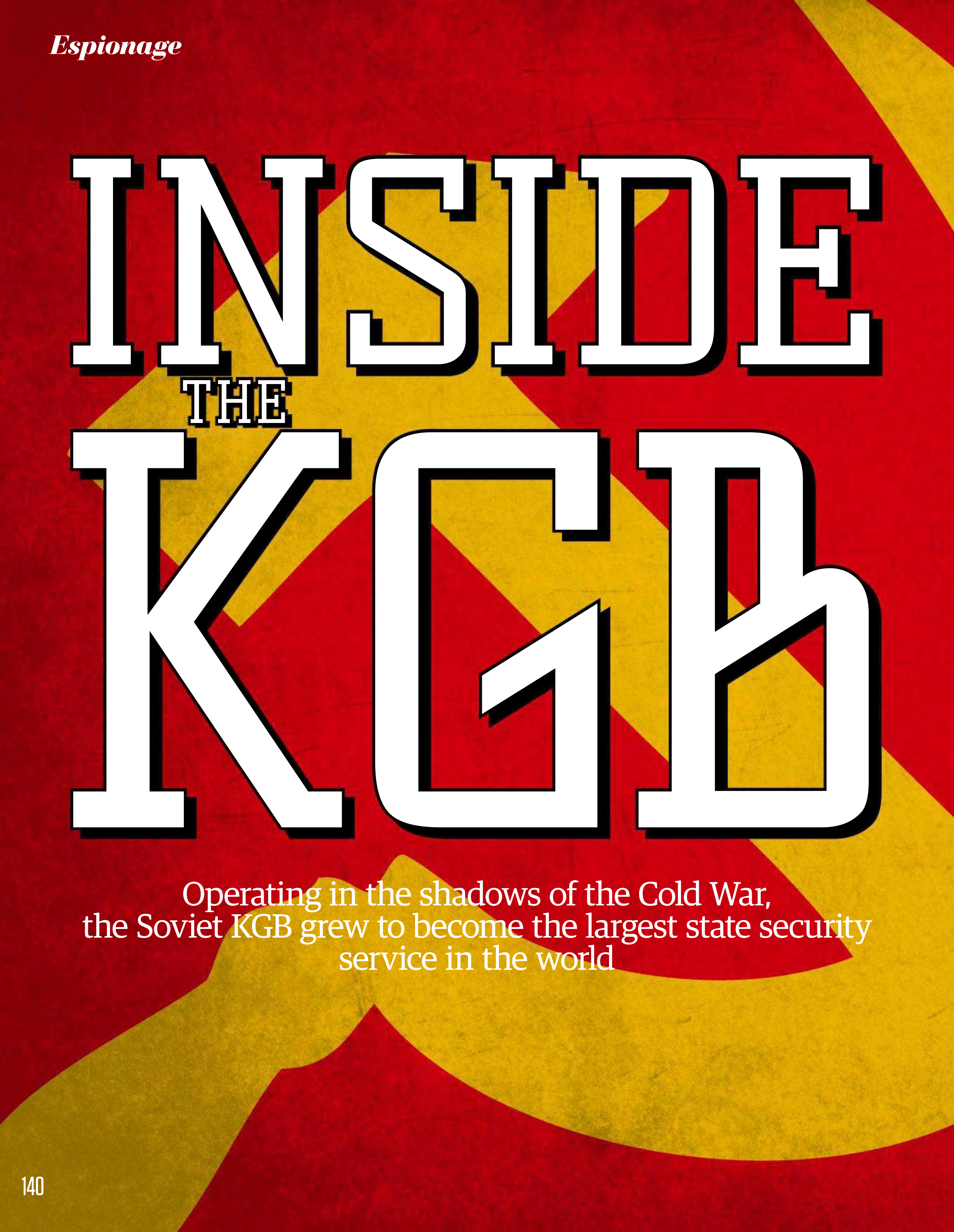
With listening devices being so easy to disguise, it was considered common practice among spies to check a room for bugs before discussing state secrets. Electronic countermeasure kits conveniently fit into a suitcase so as not to raise suspicion, but could be used to detect transmitters by scanning radio waves for a signal. While a kit like this could be bought by anyone in the 1980s, this particular model was used by John Walker, the KGB's most important spy in the United States, who was posing as a private investigator when the FBI caught him in 1985.

COTTONMOUTH-1 2009

In the modern era, its all about cyber sleuthing. We all use USB connectors – from plugging our mouse into our PC to charging our phones – but the NSA COTTONMOUTH-1 might make you think twice. This USB has a hidden radio transceiver built-in, so that it can covertly transmit files from, or install malware on, an 'air-gapped' network. That's spy-speak for a computer that intentionally doesn't have an Internet connection so it can't be remotely hacked. More advanced models can transmit over long-range radio signals, so the receiver doesn't have to be in the same room.

Fittingly, the NSA spy tool was revealed in leaked reports in 2013

© International Spy Museum



INSIDE THE KGB

Operating in the shadows of the Cold War, the Soviet KGB grew to become the largest state security service in the world

Demonstrations greeted former KGB chief Alexander Shelepin when he visited London in 1975

A year after the collapse of the Soviet Union, a former KGB officer named Vasili Mitrokhin walked into the British Embassy in Latvia. There was nothing unusual about walk-in defectors, claiming access to caches of Soviet secrets, but something about the shabbily dressed Mitrokhin and his story struck the on-duty staff as different. They offered him a cup of tea and he opened a suitcase that was stuffed full of dirty underwear and classified documents.

As head archivist for the KGB, Mitrokhin had unprecedented access to the organisation's records. In 1972 he had been tasked with moving the entire archive from the increasingly overcrowded Lubyanka headquarters in Moscow to a new facility in the more remote Yasenevo district - a task that would take 12 years to complete. Already disillusioned, the officer started taking detailed handwritten notes of the documents, which he smuggled, concealed in his shoes, to his dacha - and stashed them under the floorboards.

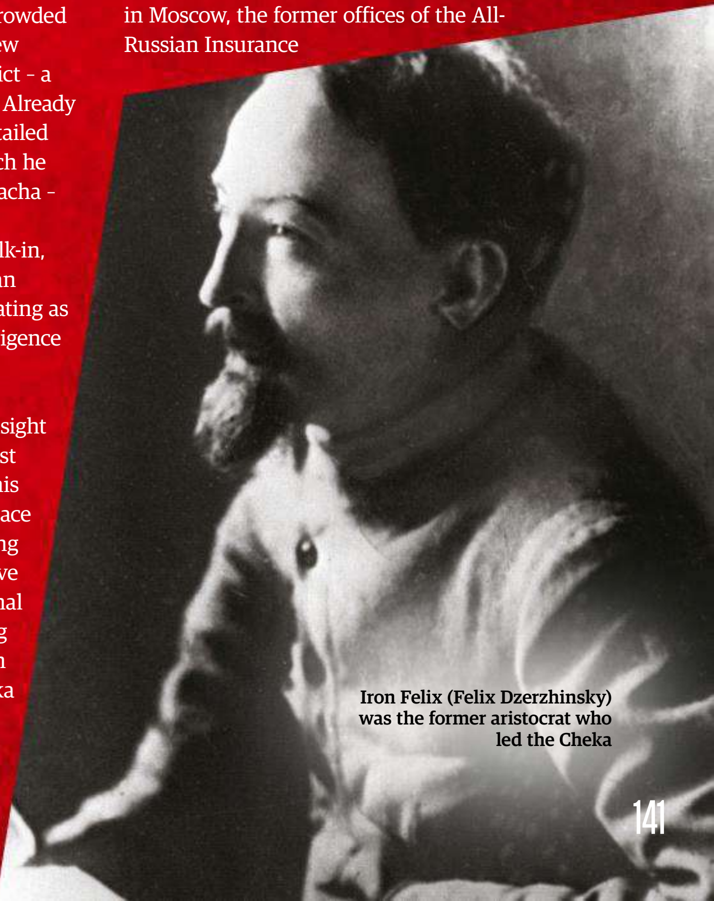
In the months following his Latvian walk-in, Mitrokhin would help to transfer more than 20,000 pages of top-secret information, dating as far back as 1918, to the British Secret Intelligence Service (MI6). The resulting revelations, presented in two books released before Mitrokhin's death, offer an unparalleled insight into the activities of one of the world's most clandestine organisations and expose, in his own words, just how thin the thread of peace really was during the Cold War. In amassing his collection of notes, Mitrokhin must have known he was taking an enormous personal risk. The KGB had a dark history of dealing with those who betrayed the cause - death sentences were carried out in the Lubyanka building and traitors were buried face down in unmarked graves.

Blood on the shield

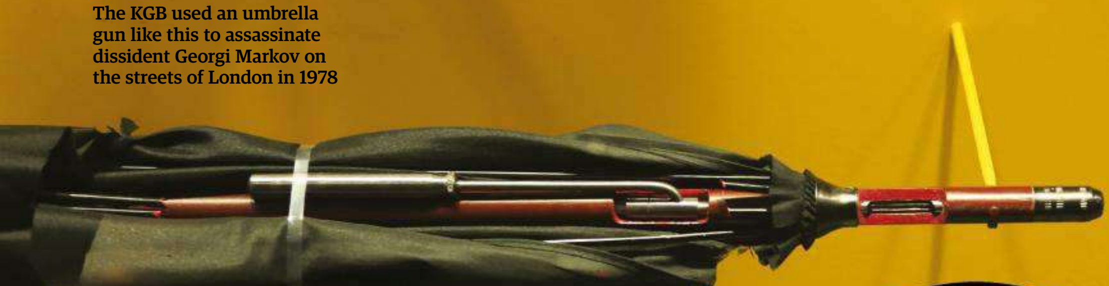
The Cold War KGB traced its roots to the establishment of the first Soviet state security organisation - the Cheka - which was created after the Bolshevik revolution on 20 December 1917. The Cheka was led by the Polish-born former aristocrat Felix Dzerzhinsky - dubbed Iron Felix. As the Bolsheviks embarked on their great communist experiment, the political leaders realised that concentrating the means of production in the hands of the state would require the support of an ever-vigilant security apparatus. They were dedicated to the dirty work of disposing of enemies of the people, and more specifically, the party.

The Soviet system would have to be protected against attacks from the remnants of the old order and the 'agents of imperialism' who would seek to destroy the new regime. The Cheka's most effective method of dealing with opposition was terror - wholesale indiscriminate arrests, summary executions without trial and grotesque torture methods. Despite the blood-stained actions of the organisation, Dzerzhinsky's description of a Chekist as a man with "a warm heart, a cool head and clean hands" would become the catchphrase of KGB training manuals. Officers would proudly refer to themselves as Chekists - receiving their pay regularly on the 20th of each month, a date that was in honour of the day the Cheka was founded. The 20 December still stands as a professional holiday in the Russian calendar - the day of national security service workers.

It was Dzerzhinsky who chose the shield and sword design that became the symbol of the KGB - representing the defence of the state and the smiting of enemies. Until 1991, an iron statue of the Cheka chief stood in front of the KGB headquarters in Moscow, the former offices of the All-Russian Insurance



Iron Felix (Felix Dzerzhinsky) was the former aristocrat who led the Cheka



The KGB used an umbrella gun like this to assassinate dissident Georgi Markov on the streets of London in 1978

The poison pellet used to assassinate Georgi Markov

company, seized in 1917. Like its predecessor, the KGB existed not to protect the people from the excesses of the state, but rather to ensure the survival of the state and the ideology of the state, from those who would threaten it, whether at home or abroad. It wasn't always known as the KGB, however, as the Soviet intelligence service renamed itself seven times before settling on the initialism in March 1954, standing for 'Komitet gosudarstvennoy bezopasnosti' (committee for state security). As Lenin's "dictatorship of the proletariat" gave way to Stalin's cult of personality, the revolutionary zeal of the security apparatus only grew with each renaming.

Inquisitorial techniques, show trials and unexplainable purges were the hallmarks of Stalinist rule - as party organs were removed, and both dissidents and party faithfuls alike were brutally dispensed with. An oft-repeated joke of the time sees the security service arrive at a home at night, only to be told: "Wrong house, the communists are next door."

Speaking in 1937, at a party gathering to celebrate the Bolshevik Revolution, Joseph Stalin succinctly summarised the nightmarish pre-occupation of the Soviet intelligence services with a terrifying ultimatum, saying: "We will mercilessly destroy anyone who by his deeds or thoughts, yes thoughts, threatens the unity of the socialist state." As Lenin famously noted: "Trust is good, control is better." Fear would inspire obedience, and the state security apparatus as the primary tool of fear would ensure order by seeking out and destroying enemies - both real and imaginary - judged by their actions, or their thoughts.

The Khrushchev Thaw

Following Stalin's death in 1953, Nikita Khrushchev became leader of the Soviet Union. Using his skills as a politician, he denounced the role of the security services in past political excesses, as official party doctrine shifted away from the ferocious orthodoxy of Bolshevik and Stalinist rule. The KGB was established in 1954, coinciding with Khrushchev's campaign of societal reforms and liberalisation. Previously banned artists were introduced, political prisoners rehabilitated and international relations improved. Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin in 1956, in a pivotal speech delivered to delegates at the 20th Party Congress in Moscow, became emblematic of the period now know as the 'Khrushchev Thaw'. Liberalisation and de-Stalinisation would have a negative impact on the status of the security organs in the Khrushchev era, though.

Semyon Tsvigun was first vice chairman in the KGB and author of spy novels

The KGB's first chairman in 1954 was Ivan Serov, who had organised deportations in Ukraine and the Baltics, and helped to build the East German secret police, the Stasi. Like Khrushchev, Serov was of the old Stalinist school. He boasted of being able to break every bone in a man's body without killing him and coordinated the bloody Soviet reaction to the Hungarian Uprising in 1956. However, his tenure as chairman was punctuated with several significant defections of KGB officers to the West and Serov's reputation as a butcher soon became too much of a diplomatic embarrassment for the reforming Khrushchev.

Khrushchev aimed to improve the image of the Soviet Union around the world, releasing millions of prisoners from the Gulag penitentiaries and transforming how the security services dealt with internal dissent. Although famous outside the Soviet Union for its foreign intelligence operations, the KGB fulfilled a variety of domestic security functions - investigating individuals for political and economic crime, and overseeing censorship and state propaganda. The Second Chief Directorate and later the Fifth Chief Directorate would counter manifestations of political unreliability at home.

Other KGB tasks included protecting the Soviet land and sea border (Border Guards Directorate), providing bodyguards for state officials (Ninth Directorate) and maintaining telephone and radio

The Red in your bed

As the KGB graduated from the crimson techniques of the Cheka to more non-violent methods, the playbook of intelligence tactics had to be refined. The use of blackmail with compromising material – now known by its Russian name, Kompromat – became one of the most effective weapons used by the KGB to take care of political housekeeping.

Although the material sometimes involved financial or criminal indiscretions, it was more often than not sexual in nature. Commonly using Intourist hotels with bugged 'plus rooms,' the KGB would deploy prostitutes to acquire embarrassing material to be used for leverage. A classic case in 1957 saw a young British naval attache named John Vassall, photographed in compromising positions with numerous men while drunk at a Moscow party and blackmailed into working for the KGB. His betrayal netted Soviet intelligence thousands of classified documents that aided in the development of the Red Navy.

In modern Russia, Kompromat was used to destroy the career of the prosecutor general, Yury Skuratov, who in 1999 was investigating corruption in the administration of Boris Yeltsin. When a grainy video of someone resembling Skuratov in bed with two young women was released, the perfect timing led many to suspect intelligence services involvement. Tasked with verifying the video on television was the head of the FSB – and future Russian president – Vladimir Putin.

John Vassall, the British naval attache

systems used by the state agencies (Sixteenth Directorate). Following Serov's removal, the new chairman, Alexander Shelepin, began to push for a more sophisticated intelligence service, removed from the brutality of the past. During his tenure (1958-1961), an influx of university graduates were appointed to replace the old guard.

Twisted psychiatry

The post-Stalin humanism of the Khrushchev era meant KGB officers were no longer inspired to beat or torture dissidents for confessions. Murder became less a tool of enforcing state control for fear of international outrage, and foreign political assassinations were largely curtailed as KGB officers began to worry about looking ineffective while fighting internal dissent.

The solution was simple. Any dissident would be diagnosed with 'sluggish schizophrenia' – a disorder developed by a psychiatrist who believed that anyone who opposed the Soviet regime must be mentally unwell. As British commentator Francis Wheen observed: "If Being determined consciousness, as the revolutionary articles of faith maintained, then it was impossible to have an anti Socialist consciousness in a Socialist society. Anyone who questioned or criticised Soviet policy must be displaying symptoms of such a consciousness, and must therefore be mad."

> "Any dissident would be diagnosed with 'sluggish schizophrenia'"

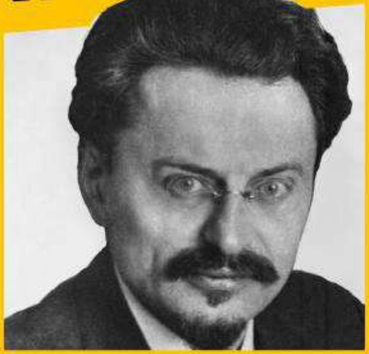
The Lubyanka building in Moscow – the original headquarters for the KGB

This form of so-called schizophrenia was categorised by deviant behaviour, and anyone diagnosed was stripped of their rights and sent to a psychiatric hospital – diminutively known as a Psikhushka. KGB chairman Yuri Andropov fully institutionalised the practice in 1969 and thousands were imprisoned in hospitals for months or even years. Nobel laureate Alexander Solzhenitsyn described this practice of punitive psychiatry as "spiritual murder." Protest while in captivity was pointless, as every complaint lodged in a patient's record was more proof of insanity. The aim was to break them physically and mentally, with drugs and electric shocks prescribed as 'treatment'.

The Khrushchev-era societal reforms would be short-lived and mostly reversed as he was succeeded by the more myopic Leonid Brezhnev in 1964, but the atmosphere at the time would forever define how the KGB operated internally. New sophisticated techniques would be developed to replace the brutality of the original Cheka.

Krushchev's policies of liberalisation at home brought considerable changes to Soviet society during a period marked by uprisings in the Soviet satellite states – in 1953 in East Germany and in 1956 in Poland and Hungary. Each time they were violently suppressed by Soviet forces. Maintaining the "integrity of international socialism" and Soviet hegemony in the Eastern Bloc became a priority.

ACTIVE MEASURES: THE LONG SWORD



Leon Trotsky

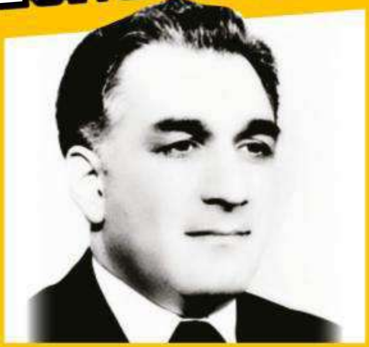
The Star Traitor • 1940

The brutal murder of Stalin's most vocal opponent in 1940 sent an important message to similar critics throughout the world. Exiled from the Soviet Union in 1929, the former head of the Red Army settled in Mexico city, only to be bludgeoned to death by an assassin wielding an ice pick.

Georgi Markov

The Umbrella Assassin • 1978

A vocal opponent of the Bulgarian regime of Todor Zhivkov, dissident writer Georgi Markov was shot with a poison pellet containing ricin, fired from an umbrella gun of KGB design, while he was waiting at a bus stop in London. Part of the pellet dissolved, enabling the poison to enter Markov's bloodstream and kill him.



President Hafizullah Amin

The Kabul Killing • 1979

Afghan leader Hafizullah Amin was killed after his Tajbeg Palace compound was stormed by an assault team led by KGB special forces – having already survived three Soviet assassination attempts. His death would coincide with a build-up of Soviet forces in the region and the start of almost ten years of occupation and war.

Stepan Bandera & Lev Rebet

The Poison Spray • 1957 + 1959

KGB assassin Bogdan Stashinsky murdered both Ukrainian nationalists by pouncing on his victims in darkened stairways, armed with a spray gun capable of delivering a lethal dose of cyanide. His defection to West Berlin and subsequent trial proved such an embarrassment for the KGB that assassinations outside the Soviet Bloc became much less frequent.

The KGB would serve as an essential tool in enforcing what, following the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, became known as the 'Brezhnev Doctrine' - a policy KGB chief Yuri Andropov would be responsible for shaping.

Yuri Andropov & the 'Hungarian Complex'

While serving as Soviet ambassador to Hungary during the 1956 uprising, the future KGB chief witnessed how quickly a seemingly all-powerful communist state could be toppled by a popular uprising. This was something that haunted him for the rest of his life. Andropov went on to become the longest-serving head of the KGB, and followed his 15-year tenure by succeeding Leonid Brezhnev as Soviet leader in 1982. His Hungarian experience had confirmed for the KGB chairman the necessity of armed force in dealing with dissent in Soviet satellite states and the need for KGB involvement outside of Russia, halting resistance that would otherwise spread to the Motherland.

The KGB would expend vast amount of resources and energy on foreign operations, either in satellite states or against the 'Imperialist forces' - in particular the 'main adversary,' the United States. So-called 'Active Measures' - political assassinations, the spreading of disinformation, the financing of terrorist groups and so on - would go hand-in-glove with ordinary intelligence gathering, to attempt to discredit Western democracies and destabilise the globe in favour of the Soviets.

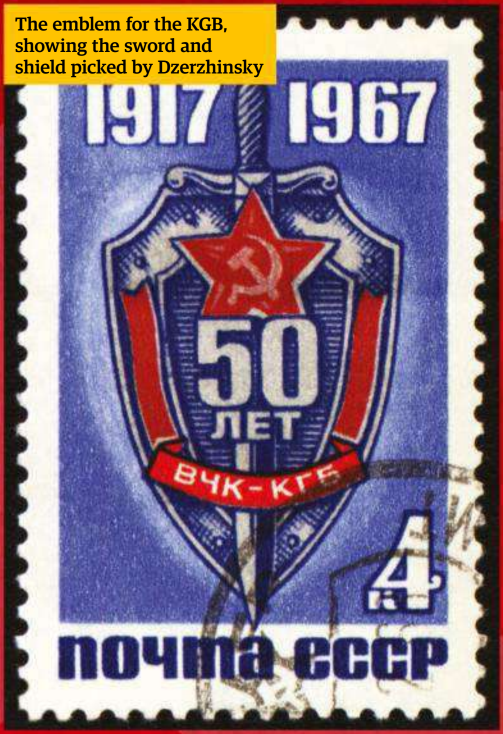
From the time of the Cheka, infiltration of foreign powers and interference of foreign affairs were considered essential tactics to defend the world's first worker-peasant state. Early successes in foreign operations were mainly in industrial espionage, and during the Stalin years the procurement of atomic secrets from the United States. Legal agents, utilising official diplomatic cover, proved an important resource. For instance, in 1962, KGB Washington legal Alexander Feklisov, who had been case officer in the Soviet Atomic Spy Ring, aided in resolving the Cuban Missile Crisis.

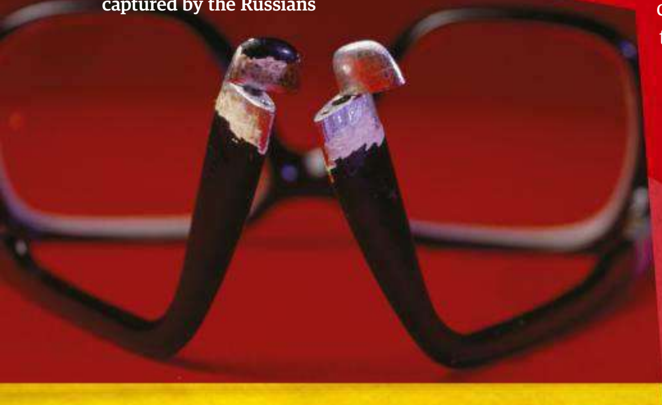
However, it was the programme of 'illegals' - agents living under deep cover abroad - that would earn the agency a reputation for commitment to the art of espionage. Overseen by the most secretive KGB department - Directorate S - the use of illegals would become a cornerstone in foreign intelligence gathering. Even when their deep cover was blown, these operations served as propaganda for the Soviets, demonstrating the iron-jawed dedicated of their agents taking the fight to the enemy, spending years living under false names and building credible backgrounds. Before embarking on an operation, these sleeper agents would swear allegiance to the Motherland "with every heartbeat, with every day that passes."

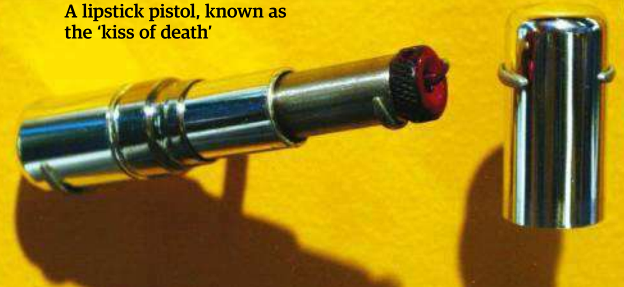
The exposing of Soviet illegal Rudolf Abel in 1957 led to one of the most widely known incidents in Cold War spycraft, as Abel was exchanged for U2 pilot Gary Powers, downed while on a top-secret CIA mission over the Soviet Union. KGB interference abroad and the success of worldwide operations, whether in Britain with the Cambridge Five or the 'main adversary' of the United States, would eventually mean nothing in the face of instability at home.

The bitter end

Backstabbing and betrayal was not uncommon in the political manoeuvring that marked the transition of power in


The emblem for the KGB, showing the sword and shield picked by Dzerzhinsky


American suicide glasses, captured by the Russians


A lipstick pistol, known as the 'kiss of death'

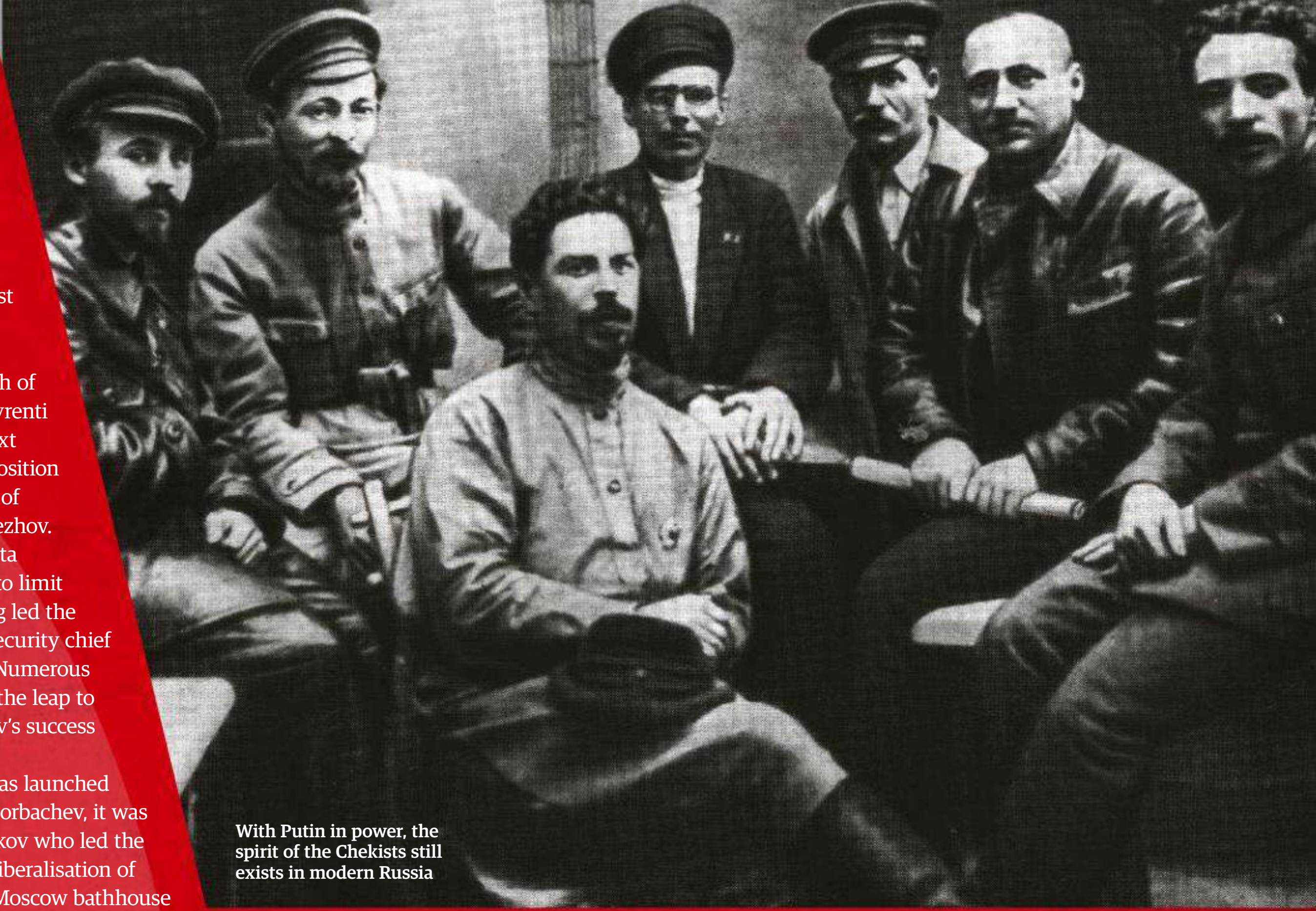
Vladimir Putin: The eternal Chekist

Serving as a KGB officer for 17 years, Vladimir Putin joined the intelligence services in 1975, serving with the First and Second Chief Directorate. Being fluent in German, his linguistic skills saw him working undercover for five years in East Germany from 1985, posing as a translator and rising to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

Although his KGB past is often mentioned in news stories, his achievements in the KGB are actually believed to have been of little note. What is more notable is the fact that Putin has proudly embraced his Chekist past. His time in the intelligence service played an important role in establishing Putin's credentials as a dedicated patriot and enabling his rise to power.

After being a loyal worker for nearly two decades, his resignation from the KGB transpired on 20 August 1991. This was the second day of the Kryuchkov-led coup attempt and no doubt impressed then prime minister Boris Yeltsin, who oversaw Putin's fast-track to director of the Federal Security Service (FSB). Following Yeltsin's shock resignation on 31 December 1999, Putin was made acting-president, and confirmed the following year. His first presidential order was to ensure corruption charges against Yeltsin were not pursued.

The struggle for Russia's post-Soviet political soul has mostly been fought between the so-called siloviki (former security services members) and oligarchs (the new rich). The siloviki must have been overjoyed at Putin's rise to power - a former intelligence officer happy to surround himself with colleagues from his earlier calling is a natural ally.



With Putin in power, the spirit of the Chekists still exists in modern Russia

the Soviet Union. The security services and members of the Politburo often conspired against each other and were equally purged as fortunes changed.

In 1953, shortly after the death of Joseph Stalin, security chief Lavrenti Beria, tipped by some as the next leader, was removed from his position and executed - sharing the fate of his predecessors, Yagoda and Yezhov. Stalin's eventual successor, Nikita Khrushchev, would endeavour to limit the potency of the KGB - having led the plot against Beria, fearing the security chief was "getting his knives ready." Numerous KGB chairmen sought to make the leap to leadership before Yuri Andropov's success in 1982.

When in 1991 a coup d'état was launched against the regime of Mikhail Gorbachev, it was the KGB head Vladimir Kryuchkov who led the attempt. Contemptuous of the liberalisation of society, he hatched a plan in a Moscow bathhouse that was ultimately destined to fail. Commentators at the time joked that communism in Russia must be over if the Bolsheviks couldn't even mount an effective coup.

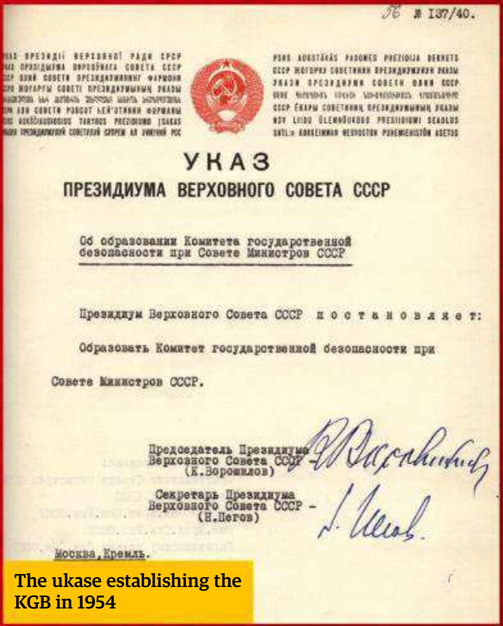
Political dissent that would have been swiftly stamped out under the rule of Brezhnev or Stalin, instead found space in Soviet society under the leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev, and policy demands that would previously have been classed as subversive, instead became mainstream. Increased transparency, market reforms and democratisation accompanied the liberalisation of Eastern Europe, as Moscow's grip on the satellite states loosened.

On Christmas Day in 1991, the hammer and sickle flag was lowered over the Kremlin for the last time. For those inside the KGB, this chaotic period only reaffirmed their belief in the need to suppress internal dissent and preserve the ruling order. However, as a result of their involvement in the attempted coup, the organisation was retired on 6 December 1991 and carved up into two new institutions: the FSB secret police agency and the SVR espionage agency.

In the mid-1990s, the word 'silovik' entered common use in Russia, to refer to former members of the military and security services who had since made the move to become politicians. They believed in a centralised system for law and order, and were prepared to use strong-arm tactics to restrict press freedom and silence opposition voices. Since then, the silovik have become influential in shaping Kremlin policy, occupying key ministerial positions throughout the government. The sword and shield still casts a long shadow over modern Russia.

> "For... the KGB, this chaotic period only reaffirmed their belief in the need to suppress internal dissent"

Krushchev denounces Stalin at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party



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УКАЗ

ПРЕЗИДИУМА ВЕРХОВНОГО СОВЕТА СССР

Об образовании Комитета государственной безопасности при Совете Министров СССР

Президиум Верховного Совета СССР постановляет:

Образовать Комитет государственной безопасности при Совете Министров СССР.

Председатель Президиума
Верховного Совета СССР -
(К.Ворошилов)

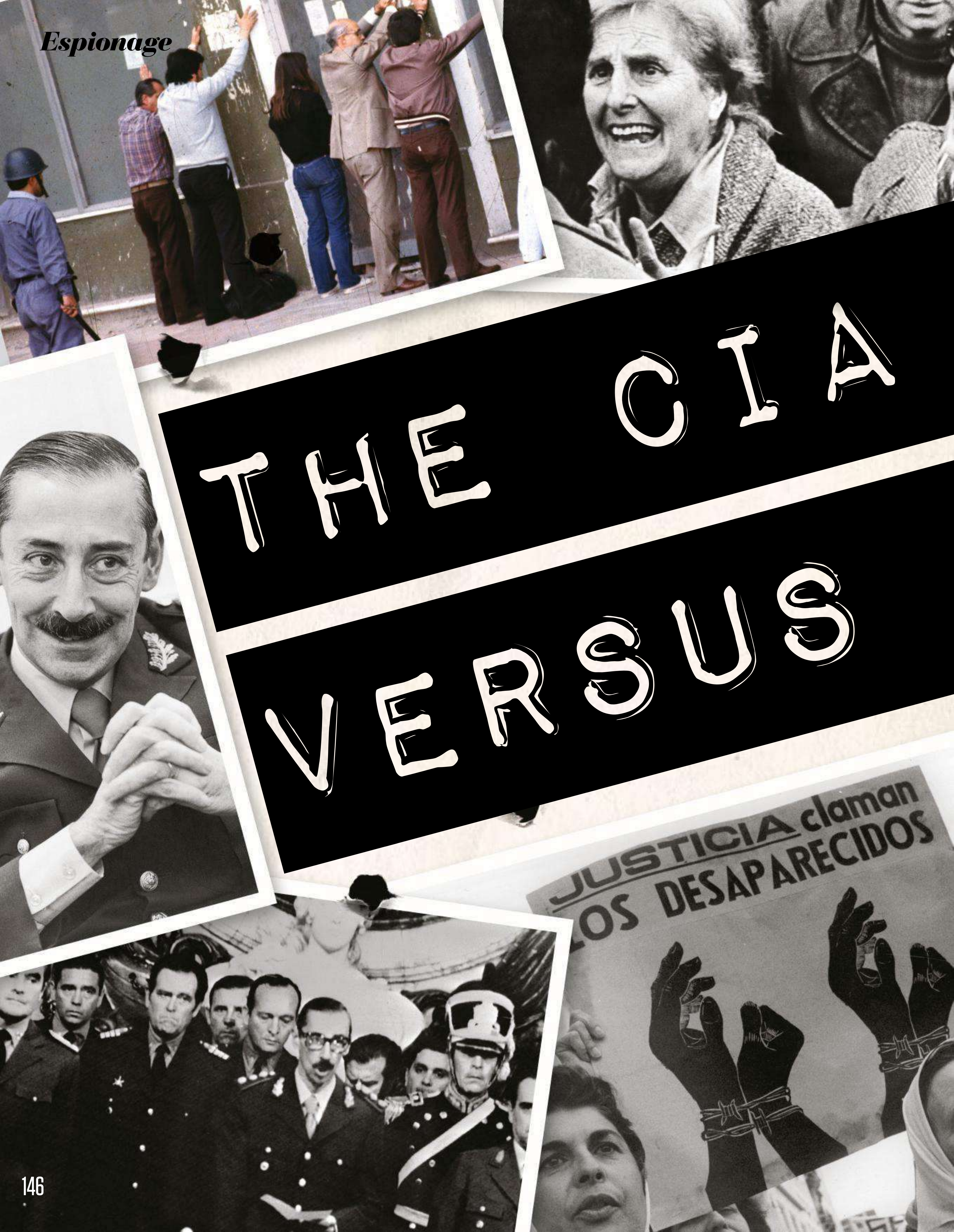
Секретарь Президиума
Верховного Совета СССР -
(Н.Пегов)

Москва,Кремль.

The ukase establishing the KGB in 1954

© Alamy, Getty

THE CIA VERSUS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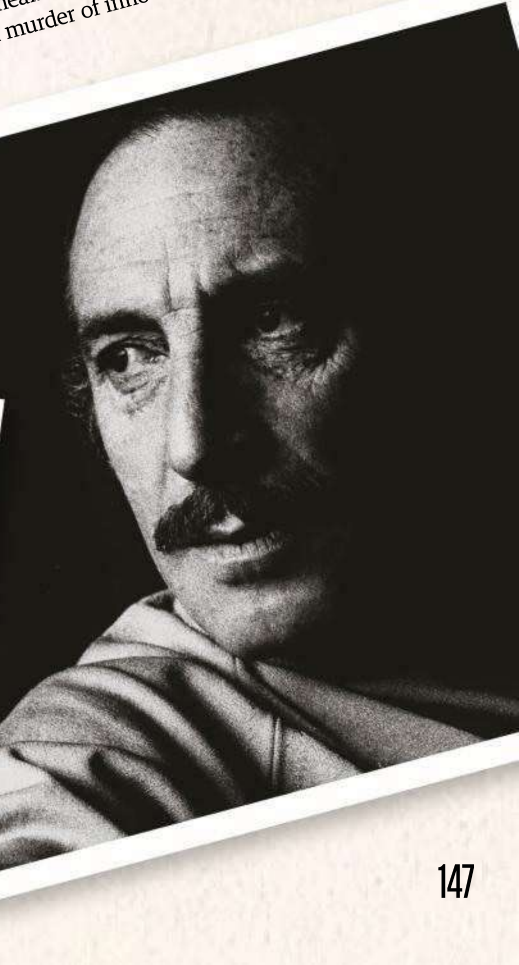
LOS DESAPARECIDOS

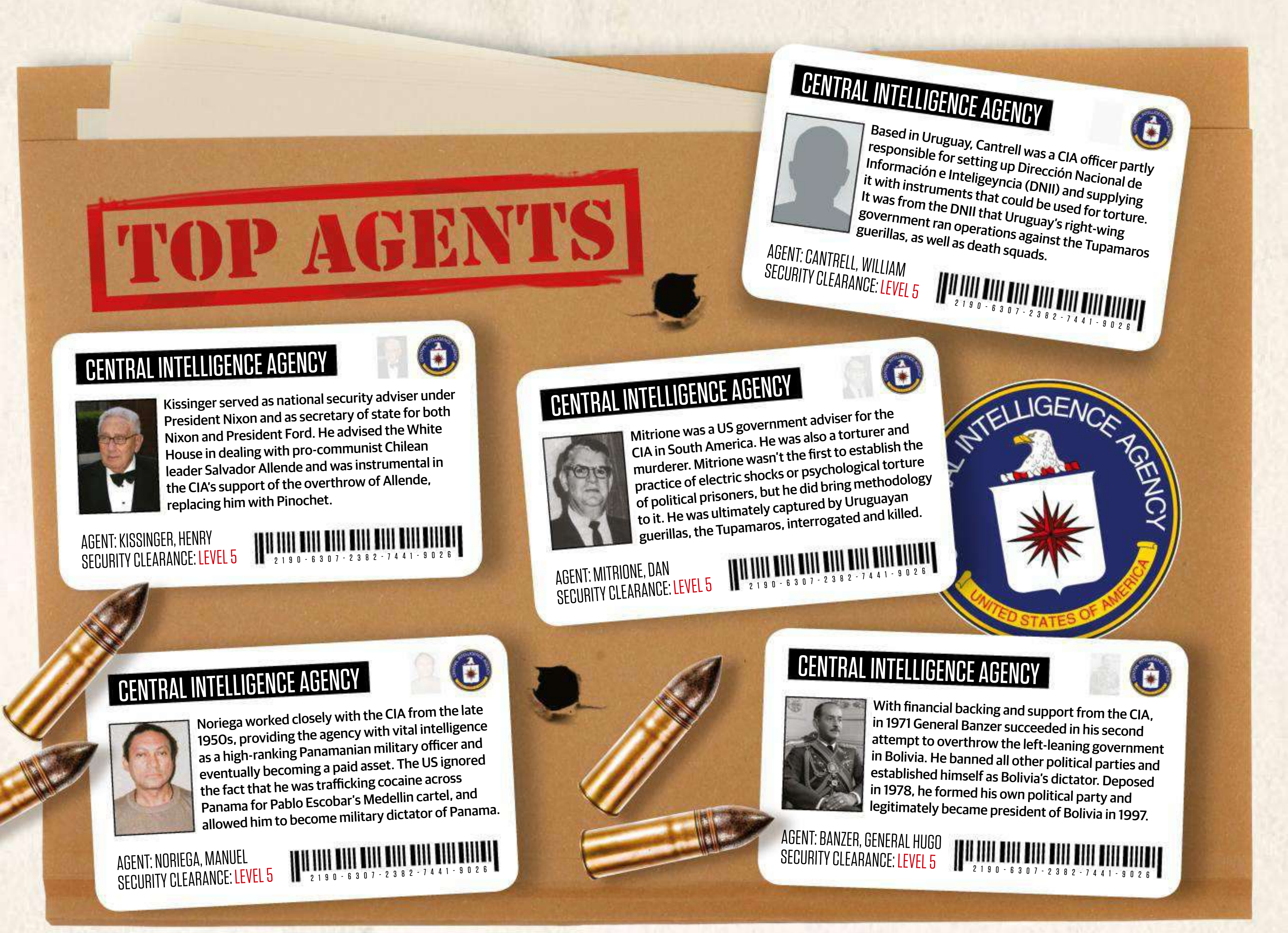
INSIDE OPERATION CONDOR: THE DEADLY US-BACKED PROGRAMME TO PURGE SOUTH AMERICA OF THE RED MENACE

COMMUNISM

In the 1970s and 1980s, most of South America was a dangerous place to be for those that leaned towards the left of the political spectrum. Anyone who was regarded as an intellectual, or acted as a union leader - in fact, anyone in a position to rally people to their side and challenge the political parties of certain states was a target. With much of the power on the continent held by military dictators, dissidents were suppressed with the threat of torture and death. These regimes shared common political opponents, so, in 1974, the heads of the intelligence agencies of Chile, Uruguay, Argentina, Paraguay and Bolivia met with the leader of Chile's secret police, Manuel Contreras, to draw up a plan: Operation Condor.

Named after the world's largest carrion bird, Condor was officially a mandate that allowed each country to target political exiles and armed groups across their borders, but it ultimately extended to families and friends of dissidents, political activists, teachers and more. Thousands were kidnapped, tortured and murdered - and behind the scenes was the US Central Intelligence Agency, providing financial, covert and even military support for the regimes of Chilean dictator General Augusto Pinochet and his allies. The CIA's goal was to subvert communism in South America at all costs and gain leverage for US business interests where it could, even if that meant the tacit support of military juntas, and the oppression and murder of innocent people.





TOP AGENTS

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Based in Uruguay, Cantrell was a CIA officer partly responsible for setting up Dirección Nacional de Información e Inteligeyncia (DNII) and supplying it with instruments that could be used for torture. It was from the DNII that Uruguay's right-wing government ran operations against the Tupamaros guerillas, as well as death squads.

AGENT: CANTRELL, WILLIAM
SECURITY CLEARANCE: LEVEL 5

2190-6307-2382-7441-9026

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Kissinger served as national security adviser under President Nixon and as secretary of state for both Nixon and President Ford. He advised the White House in dealing with pro-communist Chilean leader Salvador Allende and was instrumental in the CIA's support of the overthrow of Allende, replacing him with Pinochet.

AGENT: KISSINGER, HENRY
SECURITY CLEARANCE: LEVEL 5

2190-6307-2382-7441-9026

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Mitrione was a US government adviser for the CIA in South America. He was also a torturer and murderer. Mitrione wasn't the first to establish the practice of electric shocks or psychological torture of political prisoners, but he did bring methodology to it. He was ultimately captured by Uruguayan guerillas, the Tupamaros, interrogated and killed.

AGENT: MITRIONE, DAN
SECURITY CLEARANCE: LEVEL 5

2190-6307-2382-7441-9026

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Noriega worked closely with the CIA from the late 1950s, providing the agency with vital intelligence as a high-ranking Panamanian military officer and eventually becoming a paid asset. The US ignored the fact that he was trafficking cocaine across Panama for Pablo Escobar's Medellin cartel, and allowed him to become military dictator of Panama.

AGENT: NORIEGA, MANUEL
SECURITY CLEARANCE: LEVEL 5

2190-6307-2382-7441-9026

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

With financial backing and support from the CIA, in 1971 General Banzer succeeded in his second attempt to overthrow the left-leaning government in Bolivia. He banned all other political parties and established himself as Bolivia's dictator. Deposed in 1978, he formed his own political party and legitimately became president of Bolivia in 1997.

AGENT: BANZER, GENERAL HUGO
SECURITY CLEARANCE: LEVEL 5

2190-6307-2382-7441-9026

Orlando Letelier – Chilean ambassador to the United States, member of the Chilean Socialist Party and concentration camp survivor – was Augusto Pinochet's most powerful and outspoken critic. This made him a prime target, and on 21 September 1976, Chile's secret police – the Dirección de Inteligencia Nacional (DINA) – was emboldened by a covert agreement with high-level US intelligence officials to operate beyond its borders. As Letelier drove through the embassy district in Washington, DC, a plastic bomb hidden underneath his car exploded. The force of the blast went up into the driver's seat, killing Letelier and his US co-worker Ronni Karpen Moffitt, while Moffitt's husband, in the back seat, was injured.

This was neither the first nor the last politically motivated assassination by General Pinochet's regime, but it was the first of its kind on US soil. The hit had been ordered by Pinochet and the perpetrator was professional assassin Michael Townley, a US expatriate working for DINA who led a team of anti-Castro Cuban exiles. There are strong indications that the CIA, though it had no direct involvement in the bombing, knew about the assassination order many weeks in advance. Yet the agency did nothing to try to stop it.

This period in history, known as the Cold War, is characterised by the nuclear arms race between the Soviet Union and the United States, portentous political speeches and tense stand-offs in the streets of Berlin or the waters around Cuba, but like an iceberg, the Cold War had a lot more going on beneath the surface. The CIA took an active role in preserving democracy and stamping out the biggest political bogeyman of the day, communism, but if the former had to be sacrificed in the name of the latter... so be it.

In fact, the USA has a long history of helping to shape the political fates of other countries even before the CIA played its part in the tacit support of Pinochet's regime. In 1946, the School of the Americas was established in the US-run Panama Canal Zone as the Latin American Training Centre – Ground Division, ostensibly to school local brass in the US methods of waging war. In the aftermath of the 1953-9 Cuban Revolution, the school's remit changed dramatically and military figures from across Latin America – some of them future dictators – would go to learn the brutal counter-insurgency techniques that could help the US hold back the Red Tide they saw around every corner.

At around the same time that voices were raised in protest on the streets of Cuba's capital Havana, Guatemala was enjoying the fruits of freedom, having shrugged off dictator Jorge Ubico and the shackles that US business the United Fruit Company imposed on the people in 1946. The new Guatemalan government redistributed land to farmers, gave power to unions and created literacy programmes. President Juan Arévalo's politics were capitalist, but the move away from the political right both alarmed the US and put a huge dent in a business that had profited enormously from slavish labour practices. The CIA recruited dozens of opponents to Arévalo, denounced Guatemala

Haitian dictator Papa Doc Duvalier handed the 'president for life' title to his son when he died in 1971

Vivo
MANUEL CONTRERAS
General (R) Ejército

From the safety of his ranch, former head of the Chilean secret police defies the court decision to hand him a seven-year sentence for Letelier's assassination

> "THE USA HAS A LONG HISTORY OF HELPING TO SHAPE THE POLITICAL FATES OF OTHER COUNTRIES"

CONTRERAS Y ESPINOZA A LA CARCEL
En Chile para siempre
ORLANDO LETELIER
CHILE NECESITA JUSTICI

Chileans stage a peaceful protest in Santiago calling for justice for Orlando Letelier

The US invades Panama during Operation Just Cause, to oust Manuel Noriega – his usefulness had come to an end

and spread propaganda that the country had been infiltrated by communists. Then in 1954, a CIA-backed invasion by exiled Lieutenant Colonel Carlos Castillo Armas overthrew the government and took power. This was a turning point for the White House: despite international criticism, the powerbrowkers in the Capitol were starting to see how the CIA could be used to subvert other nations where diplomatic sweet-talking, aid and rebukes failed. Someone else had made the same observation: Argentinian Ernesto 'Che' Guevara, who escaped from Guatemala City and went on to join the Cuban Revolution as Fidel Castro's right-hand man, travelling to Latin America and Africa as a freewheeling agent of insurrection.

In the two decades leading to the 1974 meeting in Chile, military juntas spread like a virus across the Caribbean and the Cone of South America. In the same year as the Armas coup, General Alfredo Stroessner seized power in Paraguay, then either ensured he was the only candidate in 30 years of elections, or rigged them. Brazilian president João Goulart was overthrown by General Olympio Mourão Filho in 1964, and in 1971, anti-communist General Hugo Banzer wore his political nemesis – President Juan José Torres – down with a series of coups that won him the dictatorship of Bolivia. In Uruguay, President Juan María Bordaberry orchestrated a civic-military coup in June 1973 and Pinochet took control of Chile three months later.

This apparent domino effect was no coincidence. If the Central Intelligence Agency wasn't wielding the might of the US budget to directly fund the juntas – supplying them with arms, spreading propaganda or feeding them vital intelligence – then it was keeping a covert eye on the situation as it unfolded and intervening only if it looked like the Reds were in danger of getting the upper hand.

This was certainly the case in Haiti in 1958, where the self-appointed 'president for life' François 'Papa Doc' Duvalier quelled an uprising with CIA support. Despite reservations about its dictatorial ruler who increasingly styled himself after the Vodou spirit – or loa – of death, Baron Samedi, the proximity of the island to Cuba and Papa Doc's anti-Castro sentiment meant the US would condone the awful status quo in Haiti as long as it remained a frontline buffer against communism. Duvalier and his successor went on to murder tens of thousands and plunged a once-prosperous country into poverty.

> "THE US LEADERSHIP AT THE TIME WAS ABLE TO SHOW HOW IT WAS WINNING THE WAR AGAINST THE REDS"

Agent Daniel Mitrione had been operating in Brazil for much of the time between 1960 and 1967, where President João Goulart was doing his best to make sweeping social economic reforms to spread wealth and promote education. As a man

On the streets of Argentina, the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo still protest about their 'disappeared' children

APOYAMOS EL PROYECTO NACIONAL Y POPULAR
LAS ESTINAS

SCHOOL OF THE DICTATORS

INSIDE THE CIA TRAINING CAMP FOR LATIN AMERICAN MILITARY OFFICERS

The seed of the principles that would guide the Latin American dictatorships of the 1970s would be planted – by the US – in 1946, when the US Army built the School of the Americas at Fort Gulick, Panama. Its motto, "Libertad, Paz y Fraternidad" (Freedom, Peace and Fraternity), was, much like its name, a thinly disguised euphemism for what the School of the Americas actually promoted: anything but communism.

In 1961, as the Cold War amped up, it began to teach anti-communist counter-insurgency to South American military personnel. Some have suggested that in the early years, this included torture methods. Its notorious graduates included Jorge Rafael Videla (Argentinian dictator from 1976-81), Hugo Banzer (Bolivian dictator from 1971-78), Manuel Contreras (head of Chile's secret police from 1973-77) and Manuel Noriega (Panamanian dictator from 1983-89).

The list from Operation Condor's era alone is a long one. All had involvement in the extensive human rights abuses perpetrated by the operation, all have blood on their hands, and yet few have been made accountable for the full extent of their crimes. Curiously, included in the School of the Americas alumni are members of Los Zetas, the powerful and notoriously violent Mexican crime cartel that favours intimidation and brutal assassination over bribery. In this case at the very least, the US clearly shot itself in the foot.

"FEW HAVE BEEN MADE ACCOUNTABLE FOR THE FULL EXTENT OF THEIR CRIMES"

Interrogation techniques were taught at the School of the Americas in Fort Gulik, Panama

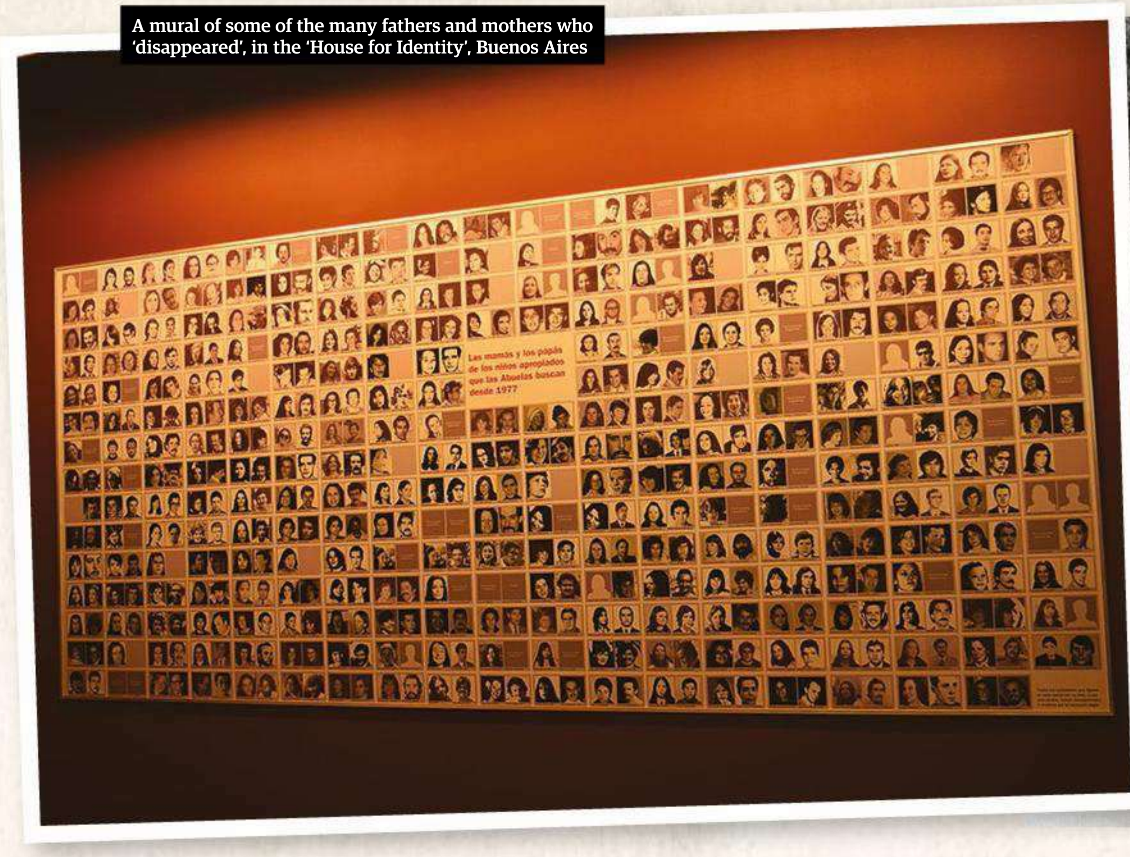
with considerable private finances, President Goulart was anti-communist but leaned to the political left. Too far to the left for the liking of US foreign policy adviser Henry Kissinger, who sent teams of psychological warfare agents (Psy-ops) to spread malicious rumours and misinformation about Goulart, softening Brazil up in preparation for a military coup.

While the propaganda took hold, the CIA began communicating with senior executive Jack Burford of the Hanna Mining Company, which had stakes in Brazil's mineral companies. Burford travelled to Brazil for a secret meeting with Goulart – one that would line the Brazilian president's pockets and profit both the US and Hanna Mining – but Goulart rejected the deal. Thus, President Lyndon Johnson green-lit the coup to overthrow João Goulart and he was exiled by Brazil's generals under the shadow of a nearby US Navy taskforce.

Mitrione stayed behind to help remove remaining Goulart supporters and assist Brazilian police in the interrogation techniques in which he excelled. He was then sent to Uruguay in 1969, where he honed his skills allegedly torturing beggars that he snatched off the streets, deploying his methods even against pregnant women with the clinical efficiency of a surgeon. Manuel Hevia Cosculluela, a Cuban double agent, worked for the CIA under Mitrione's supervision, often observing him. Cosculluela later wrote about his experiences when he returned to Cuba: "There was no interrogation, only a demonstration of the effects of different voltages on the different parts of the human body, as well as demonstrating the use of a drug, which induces vomiting – I don't know why or what for – and another chemical substance. The four of them died."

Cosculluela also described some of the twisted torture theory that Mitrione discussed with him.

Military members of the Bolivian junta are sworn in with the support of Brazil and Peru


Las mamás y los papás de los niños apropiados que las Abuelas buscan desde 1977

A mural of some of the many fathers and mothers who 'disappeared', in the 'House for Identity', Buenos Aires

Pictured here in September 1973, General Pinochet was finally stripped of political immunity in 2004, although he died before he could be convicted

First came the 'softening up' phase of beating and insults, no questions asked, followed by relentless beatings. Then the interrogation began. "The precise pain, in the precise place, in the precise amount, for the desired effect," was Mitrione's method. "You must always leave him some hope, a distant light... it may be good to prolong the session a little to apply another softening-up," he continued. "Not to extract information now, but only as a political measure, to create a healthy fear of meddling in subversive activities."

The people of Argentina arguably suffered more than any other South American country as a result of Operation Condor, with its death toll peaking at three times Chile's estimated 10,000 murder victims. Even before the Argentinian dictator Jorge Videla took over in 1976 with the support of the CIA and the blessing of US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, Videla was waging what was known as the 'Dirty War' against the Argentinian people as a senior military officer. The targets of his death squads included Marxists, left-wing activists and supporters of Argentina's previous – democratically elected – president.

His junta perpetrated a cultural genocide against students, priests, union members, artists and academics, inside concentration camps where Mitrione's methods were practiced daily. Tales of abuse and torture were rife from the surviving victims. In 1979, Videla described the victims as "... not dead or alive... just disappeared," and indeed, many who went missing during this time have never been accounted for and are presumed dead.

The CIA had complicity in this 'Dirty War' and Henry Kissinger had been well aware of the Argentinian military's tactics since 1970. By 1976, US Congress had become concerned about the human rights abuses and was considering sanctions against Argentina. In a recently declassified transcript, Kissinger sought to reassure the visiting Argentinian foreign minister, Admiral César Augusto Guzzetti, that he had US backing.

"I have an old-fashioned view that friends ought to be supported," said Kissinger. "What is not understood in the United States is that you have a civil war. We read about human rights problems, but not the context. The quicker you succeed the better... The human rights problem is a growing one... We want a stable situation. We won't cause you unnecessary difficulties. If you can finish before Congress gets back, the better. Whatever freedoms you could restore would help."

> "THE PEOPLE OF ARGENTINA ARGUABLY SUFFERED MORE THAN ANY OTHER SOUTH AMERICAN COUNTRY"

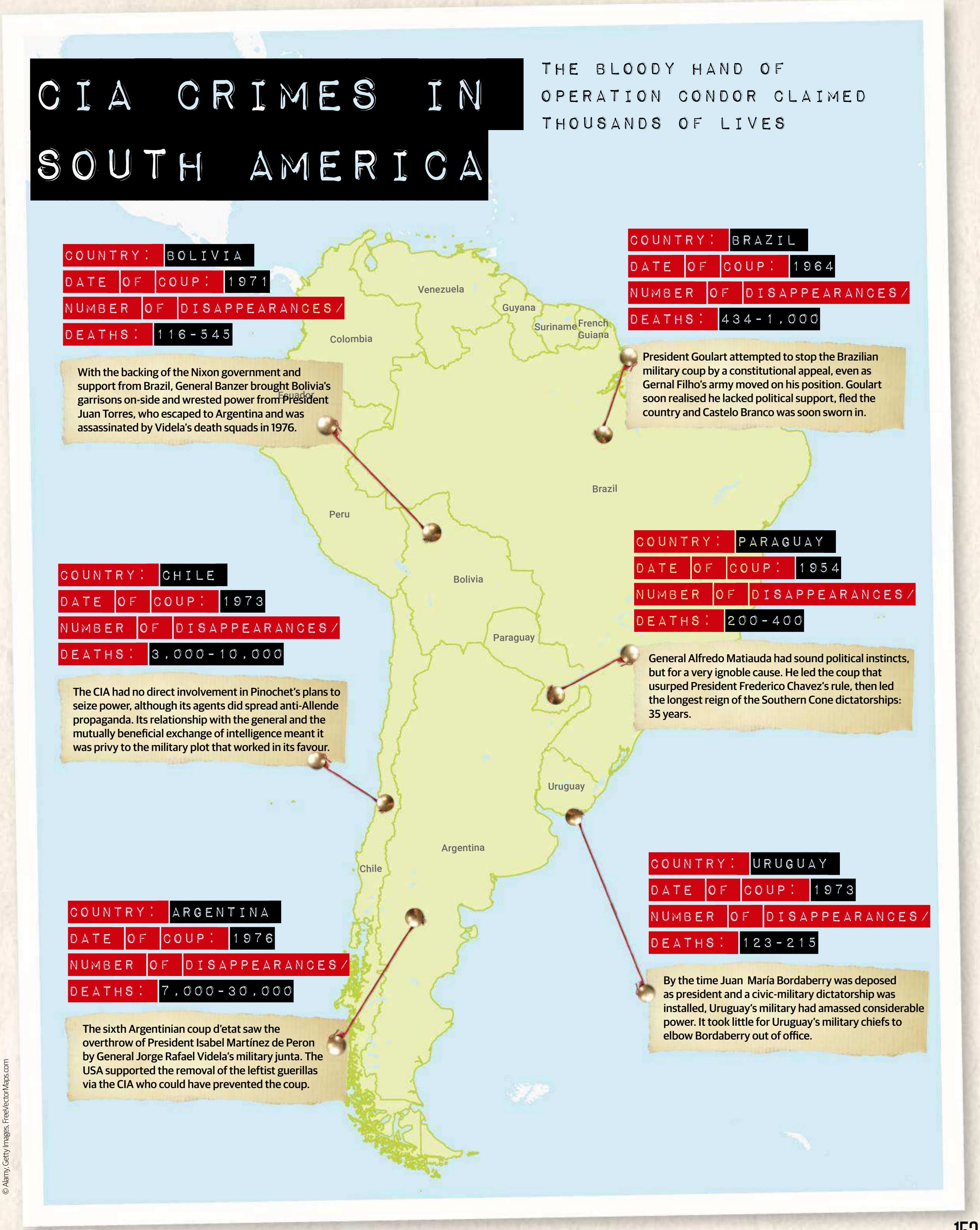
In 1999, US President Bill Clinton ordered the declassification and release of thousands of documents, confirming that the CIA had intimate knowledge of Operation Condor and even some indirect involvement in the state-sanctioned murders and atrocities committed by Southern Cone juntas. The documents also showed that the CIA and the State Department had the intelligence to prevent the assassination of Orlando Letelier, among others, but allowed it to happen anyway.

Strictly speaking, Operation Condor was a success, for a time. Through a campaign of merciless repression and active elimination of political foes, the juntas of six Latin American countries held communism at bay. The US leadership at the time was able to show how it was winning the war against the Reds and at the same time support US business interests abroad, boosting its economy. But even without pragmatic hindsight, it was clearly unsustainable. The interpretation of a 'communist' had gone from far left-wing political activists and urban guerillas opposed to the regime, to people with views that didn't align with state ideology to friends and families of those people regardless of their political opinions. Pinochet and company were throwing the baby out with the bathwater in order to maintain absolute control.

Inevitably, as international attention focused on the horror unfolding across South America, the CIA pulled funding and support as the US weighed up the risk of being associated with human rights atrocities. By 1989, with the end of Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega's regime and the fall of the Iron Curtain, Condor came to an end. The CIA brushed another of its sordid engagements under the carpet and, for a while, that's where it stayed.

CIA CRIMES IN SOUTH AMERICA

THE BLOODY HAND OF OPERATION CONDOR CLAIMED THOUSANDS OF LIVES



COUNTRY: BOLIVIA
DATE OF COUP: 1971
NUMBER OF DISAPPEARANCES/DEATHS: 116-545

With the backing of the Nixon government and support from Brazil, General Banzer brought Bolivia's garrisons on-side and wrested power from President Juan Torres, who escaped to Argentina and was assassinated by Videla's death squads in 1976.

COUNTRY: BRAZIL
DATE OF COUP: 1964
NUMBER OF DISAPPEARANCES/DEATHS: 434-1,000

President Goulart attempted to stop the Brazilian military coup by a constitutional appeal, even as Gernal Filho's army moved on his position. Goulart soon realised he lacked political support, fled the country and Castelo Branco was soon sworn in.

COUNTRY: CHILE
DATE OF COUP: 1973
NUMBER OF DISAPPEARANCES/DEATHS: 3,000-10,000

The CIA had no direct involvement in Pinochet's plans to seize power, although its agents did spread anti-Allende propaganda. Its relationship with the general and the mutually beneficial exchange of intelligence meant it was privy to the military plot that worked in its favour.

COUNTRY: PARAGUAY
DATE OF COUP: 1954
NUMBER OF DISAPPEARANCES/DEATHS: 200-400

General Alfredo Matiauda had sound political instincts, but for a very ignoble cause. He led the coup that usurped President Frederico Chavez's rule, then led the longest reign of the Southern Cone dictatorships: 35 years.

COUNTRY: ARGENTINA
DATE OF COUP: 1976
NUMBER OF DISAPPEARANCES/DEATHS: 7,000-30,000

The sixth Argentinian coup d'etat saw the overthrow of President Isabel Martínez de Peron by General Jorge Rafael Videla's military junta. The USA supported the removal of the leftist guerillas via the CIA who could have prevented the coup.

COUNTRY: URUGUAY
DATE OF COUP: 1973
NUMBER OF DISAPPEARANCES/DEATHS: 123-215

By the time Juan María Bordaberry was deposed as president and a civic-military dictatorship was installed, Uruguay's military had amassed considerable power. It took little for Uruguay's military chiefs to elbow Bordaberry out of office.

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MMXVII

ALL ABOUT HISTORY PRESENTS

MATA HARI

"SPY OR SCAPEGOAT?"

DISCOVER THE LOVE, LIES AND TRAGIC LIFE OF THE ACCUSED EXOTIC DANCER WHO FACED THE FIRING SQUAD

Awakened in her Paris prison cell, Mata Hari pulled on her stockings, high-heeled slippers, long black velvet cloak and announced, "I am ready." She cut a striking figure, a woman who moved with the cool confidence of one accustomed to admiring glances. To a passerby, she could have been on her way to just another performance, but this would be her last. Flanked by an army officer, her lawyer and two nuns, she was escorted to meet the firing squad.

It was not quite 6am when the car stopped and Mata Hari stepped out, pulling her coat tight to keep out the chill autumnal air. She glanced at the 13 soldiers with what one eyewitness described as "disdain", and calmly walked towards a large wooden stake in front of a hummock of earth that would provide a backdrop for any stray bullets. When she was offered the customary blindfold, she asked, "Must I wear that?" "If Madame prefers not, it makes no difference," came the officer's reply. Mata also refused the cord to bind her hands to the stake. Head held high, she faced her executioners as a man's voice shattered the morning stillness. In the next instant the soldiers raised their rifles, each one gazing down the barrel at the breast of the women a few yards away. Their officer stood to the side, just in their eye-line, his sword hovering in the air.

Forty-one years earlier, Margaretha 'Gretha' Geertruida Zelle had been born to a wealthy family in Holland, the only daughter among four children. She grew up resourceful and confident, learning much from the observation of her brothers and her successful father. But not long into her adolescence, Gretha's idyll collapsed when her father's speculation in oil shares left them bankrupt. He walked out on the family and soon afterwards his wife died and Gretha was sent to live with distant relatives. The decade that followed was dogged by despair. Perhaps in search of a surrogate father, she married a man twice her age, a hard-drinking and abusive officer in the East Indies army, and bore him two children. The family sailed to the Dutch East Indies where they lived in military garrisons, but it's thought that her husband was so disliked by the locals that a maid poisoned the children. The boy died and the girl was badly harmed.

Gretha divorced her husband in 1902 but he refused to pay his ex-wife any maintenance money so, unable to feed her young daughter, she had no choice but to send the child to live with her father in Holland. Not willing to give up hope, Gretha moved to Paris to try and earn enough money to take back her daughter, but there were few jobs for young women in the French capital. For a while, Gretha scraped a meagre living giving piano lessons and teaching German, but she was soon obliged to accept less respectable work, first as an artist's nude model and then as an exotic dancer. "Don't think that I'm bad at heart," she wrote to an acquaintance. "I have done it only out of poverty." It wasn't long, however, until she realised that she had a talent for dancing. She also had looks, physique and grace, not to mention a gift for invention. Trading on her olive complexion and her years in the Dutch East Indies, she styled herself as an exotic dancer of Indian extraction. To complete the makeover, Gretha took the stage name Mata Hari, an Indonesian expression meaning 'eye of dawn.'

Soon she was dancing in Paris, Berlin and Vienna, her photograph splashed across newspapers around the world. In an interview with the *New York Daily Tribune* in 1905, she spun one lie after another, telling the paper she was born in India to a Javanese mother and had married a Scottish baronet at the age of 15. Mata Hari told the truth in describing the marriage as unhappy, though, but embellished when asked about her art: "I can dance the sacred dances of India," she said, "which were taught me by my mother, who belonged to the dominant caste of the Hindoo [sic] community."

"SHE MARRIED A MAN TWICE HER AGE, A HARD-DRINKING OFFICER"

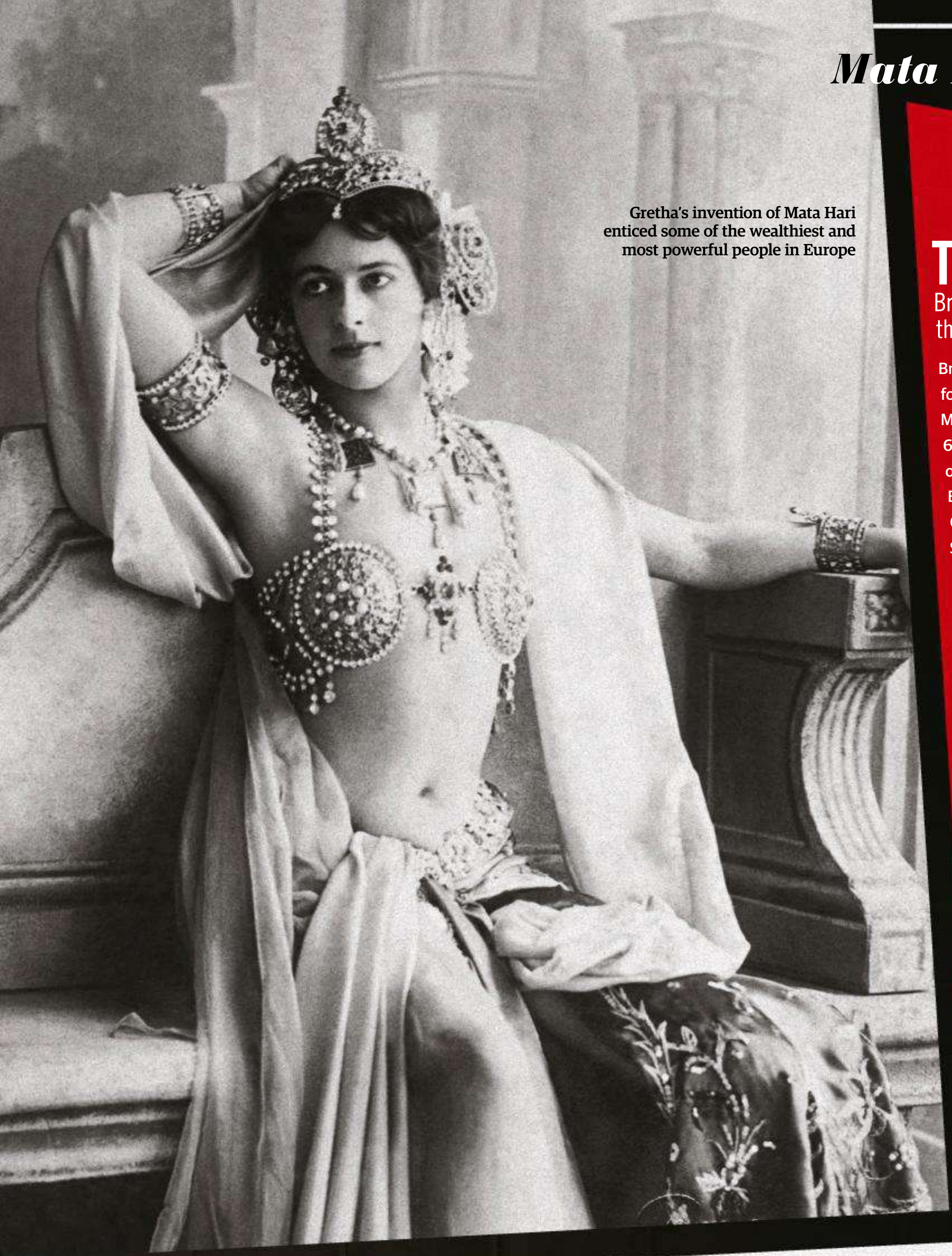
Describing Mata Hari as "exceedingly muscular… lithe and agile", the newspaper furnished its readers with a brief account of her act: "The dance begins in slow rhythms, and gradually becomes highly impassioned. The costume is purely Indian, disclosing the skin, which is profusely ornamented with jewels and slender gold chains. The feet are bare and in her improvisations… she often works herself up into a pitch of excitement and frenzy." A decade after this breathless description, her career was over. The originality of her act had long since faded, its success spawning a series of imitators who, even if they lacked Mata Hari's charisma, could still capture the allure of the dance. Nonetheless, she had enjoyed a good run, performing for private audiences in European cities and crossing the paths of rich and influential men. By the outbreak of war in 1914 and her 38th birthday, she had managed to morph from dancer to courtesan.

She was fortunate that, as a Dutch national, she could take advantage of the country's neutrality to travel freely across Europe, reputedly taking the opportunity to visit her many lovers. Such a position made her an attractive proposition for both German and French intelligence services. The first approach was made in the summer of 1916 by Captain Georges Ladoux of France's Deuxième Bureau, who Mata described as "tall and fat". He offered her one million francs in return for information on Crown Prince Wilhelm, the son of the German Kaiser and a man for whom she had danced before the war.

Money wasn't the only incentive for Mata to accept the offer; her favourite lover, a Russian

Mata Hari's risqué act disgusted and delighted polite European society in equal measure

Margaretha, 21, (front row, far left) on board the ship bound for Dutch East Indies in 1897 with her new husband behind her

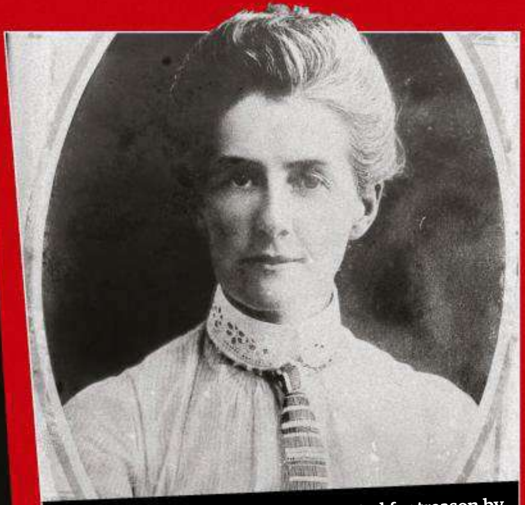


Gretha's invention of Mata Hari enticed some of the wealthiest and most powerful people in Europe

THE BIRTH OF MI5

Britain's security service sealed the fate of Mata Hari

Britain's first Secret Service Bureau was established in 1909 and following the outbreak of World War I, had split into Directorate of Military Intelligence Section 5 (MI5) and Military Intelligence, Section 6 (MI6). Head of MI5 was Captain Vernon Kell, and he and his team of agents pursued the many German spies who were operating in Britain. In total they captured 65 of the 120 agents sent to the UK by Germany and little important intelligence was sent back to Berlin. Such was the extent of MI5's counter-espionage work during WWI that their staff increased to over 800 agents, several of whom were women. MI5's suspicions about Mata Hari led to her subsequent arrest in France and few in Britain had much sympathy for her. Germany had shot a British nurse in 1915, Edith Cavell, for treason, so the death of Mata Hari evened the score in British eyes.



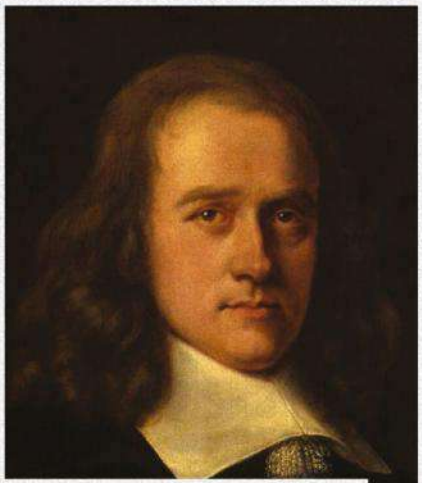
British Nurse Edith Cavell was executed for treason by the Germans in October 1915 to worldwide outrage

SPYING THROUGH THE AGES

Espionage has been a military weapon for at least 1,000 years. It was said that King Harold employed spies during his short-lived reign as king of England but it wasn't for another 600 years until intelligence became an organised branch of a monarch's army. The man responsible was John Thurloe, the spymaster for Oliver Cromwell in the years after King Charles I and his forces had been defeated in the Civil War. Thurloe planted spies in the most unlikely of places, including the mathematical genius John Wallis, who became arguably the world's first code-breaker, deciphering messages sent between Royalist dissidents.

If some spies relied on brains, others deployed bravado or beauty. In the American Civil War, Rose O'Neal Greenhow spied for the Rebel Confederates, using her charm and good looks to extract information from Union officers. Working for the other side was a Welshman called Pryce Lewis, who dressed as an English nobleman and toured the rebel states in a luxurious carriage, fooling Confederate officers over a glass of port into divulging information to the sympathetic Briton. One of Lewis's fellow Union spies was an Englishman called Daniel Webster; he was caught by the Rebels in 1862 and hanged. Execution has been the fate of many spies caught behind enemy lines, although the Hague Regulations of 1907 state that: "A spy taken in the act shall not be punished without previous trial."

Of the 31 German agents brought to trial in Britain in World War I, 12 were executed, with all but one of the unfortunate spies shot at the Tower of London. With the technological advances of the 20th century, spying grew ever more sophisticated but the punishments remained the same – when Soviet general Dmitri Polyakov was caught spying for the USA in 1988, he was subsequently executed.



John Thurloe, known as Oliver Cromwell's spymaster, established a nationwide network of spies in the 1650s

DEFENSE D'AFFICHER SOUS PEINE

Saint-Lazare prison in Paris, where Mata Hari was imprisoned between her arrest and trial

The Nivelle Offensive in April 1917 to break through the German defences on the Western Front ended in French failure

fighter pilot called Vadim Maslov, had recently been shot down, and was recovering in a French military hospital. Spy for us, posited Captain Ladoux, and access to Maslov will be arranged. Within a few weeks Mata was in Madrid, in the company of the German military attaché, Major Arnold Kalle, requesting a private audience with the Crown Prince. It was during this time that suspicions began to surface about exactly where Mata's loyalties lay.

She had first come to the attention of Britain's intelligence services, the recently formed MI5, in November 1915 when her ship from Holland docked at Tilbury. She was searched and questioned, and although nothing incriminating was found by the authorities, a letter was sent to MI5 declaring: "She is regarded by police and military to be not above suspicion and her subsequent movements should be watched." When Mata returned to England the following year, she was interrogated for three days by MI5 and although she said she was in the pay of the French secret service, her "contradictory statements" led the British to put her on a boat to Spain with a message circulated that "should she again return to the United Kingdom she was to be detained."

While the British communicated their suspicions to their French counterparts that perhaps the dancer was not all she seemed, she arrived in Madrid and went straight to the German Embassy. By now the Germans were also harbouring doubts and a trap was set for her, into which she fell, passing some false information about submarines that had been fed to her by Major Kalle on to Captain Ladoux. When Kalle learned of Mata's deceit, he radioed Berlin that their spy, code-named H-21, was a double agent. The coded message was intercepted by a French listening station in the Eiffel Tower, and subsequently decoded by British cryptographers in Room 40 of Admiralty Arch. A further message revealed the name and address of H-21's maid – who also happened to be Mata's maid.

She was arrested in her hotel on the Champs Elysées in Paris on 13 February 1917, and after five months stewing in the grim Saint-Lazare prison, Mata stood trial on charges of spying for Germany. The evidence against her was weak. She admitted taking money from the Germans but denied that she had divulged classified information, ridiculing suggestions she was indirectly responsible for the deaths of 50,000 French soldiers. As for the phial of invisible ink that Captain Ladoux claimed had been discovered in her hotel room, Mata Hari said it was nothing of the sort and was actually part of her make-up.

The British and American press joined in the farrago, claiming the woman on trial was indeed one of the war's most dangerous spies. According to the *New York World*, she "spent some time in an English town where the first 'tanks' were being made," and subsequently had passed on crucial information to the Germans about their design, "resulting in the enemy rushing work on a special gas to combat their operations." It was nonsense.

In truth, Mata might have passed on inconsequential gossip about life in France to the Germans but she was guilty of nothing more than that. MI5 described her in its report as a "demi-mondaine", a harlot, and in a telegram to Major Anson of MI5, a member of the British

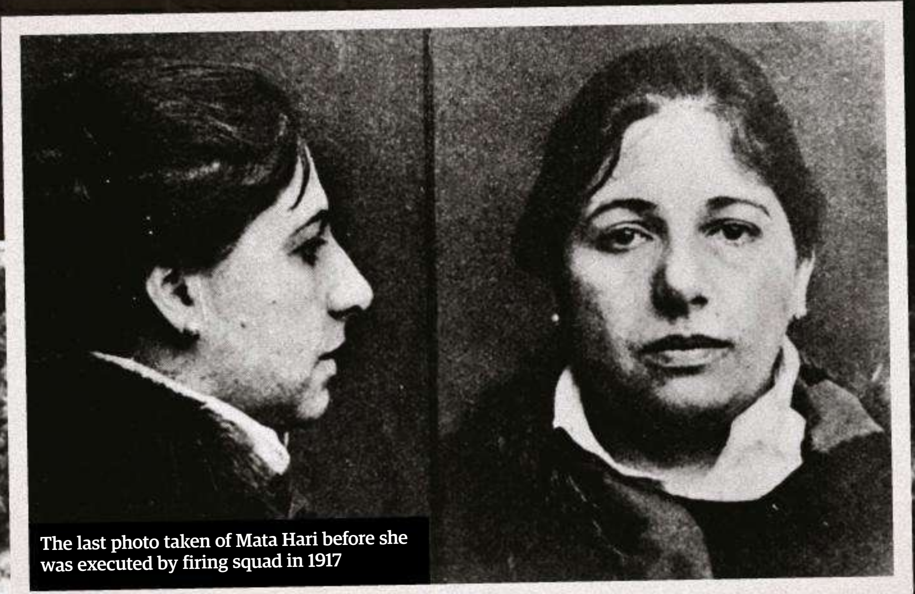
"THE BRITISH COMMUNICATED THEIR SUSPICIONS… THAT PERHAPS THE DANCER WAS NOT ALL SHE SEEMED"

Mission in Paris wrote: "Captain Ladoux, who had the case in hand, tells me that they found nothing incriminating among her effects and nothing to show that she had been in any way connected with espionage in England. During her interrogation she divulged nothing." Yet after a trial that lasted just two days, the dancer was found guilty and sentenced to death. "C'est impossible!" she reportedly cried, when informed of the verdict.

What Mata didn't know was that France needed a victim. The war was going badly, and a major offensive on the Aisne in April had failed, prompting widespread mutinies among soldiers. It would strike a further blow to the nation's morale if the notorious spy Mata Hari was found 'not guilty'. She had to die, if only for the sake of French propaganda and pride.

British reporter Henry Wales was one of the few journalists present at the execution of Mata Hari on 15 October 1917. He couldn't help but marvel at her composure as she stood at the stake, waiting for death. "She did not die as actors and moving picture stars would have us believe that people die when they are shot," he wrote. "She did not throw up her hands nor did she plunge straight forward or straight back. Instead she seemed to collapse. Slowly, inertly, she settled to her knees, her head up always, and without the slightest change of expression on her face."

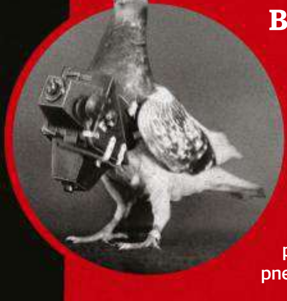
Margaretha Geertruida Zelle's life was over. Abandoned by her father, abused by her husband and exploited by three intelligence agencies, she went to her death with dignity and courage. The woman who had played so many parts over the years saved her greatest performance till last.


The last photo taken of Mata Hari before she was executed by firing squad in 1917

An inaccurate depiction of Mata Hari's execution from a 1920 film

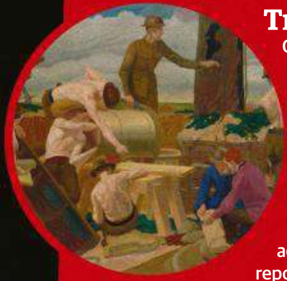
TRICKS OF THE TRADE

World War I was one of the first conflicts where technology was used to spy on the enemy, and both sides came up with some ingenious ruses to outsmart their adversary



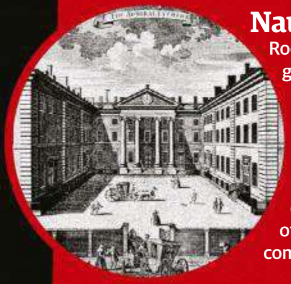
Bird's eye view

A German doctor invented 'pigeon cam' in 1908, creating a harness and breastplate to secure the camera to the pigeon. During WWI pigeons flew over British lines and the camera would take photographs using a pneumatic system time delay.



Tree trickery

Observation post trees were used by Germany and Britain on the Western Front to spy on each other. Built using iron and canvas, the hollow tree stumps could accommodate a man whose job it was to observe enemy activity during the day and report back at night.



Naughty 40

Room 40 was the name given to the team of British code-breakers based in the Admiralty Old Building, who, using a captured German code book, successfully decoded some 15,000 of the enemy's secret communications during WWI.

Telephone taps

Germany had a unit of 'Telephone Troops' on the Western Front in WWI, who eavesdropped on British phone conversations by detecting the electrical signals as they went through the ground and amplifying them on high-powered listening sets.

Geheimschrift
Geheime Tinte
Geheime Tinte
Geheimschrift

Vanishing act

Secret agents of both sides used invisible ink in WWI to pass messages. German spies made their ink using powdered aspirin mixed with pure water, while another reliable recipe was lemon juice and potassium, which would reveal the message when heated.

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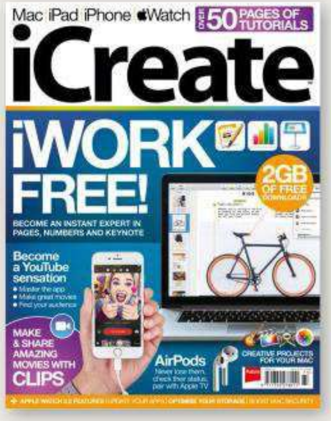

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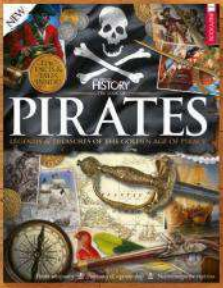
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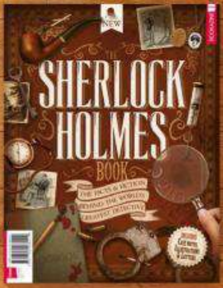
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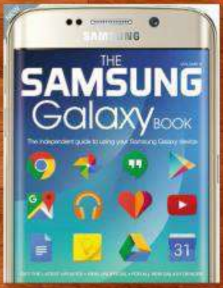
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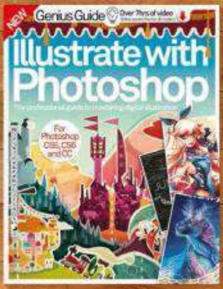
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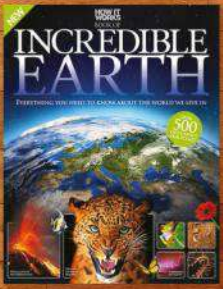
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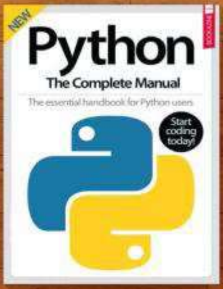
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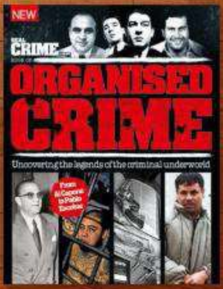
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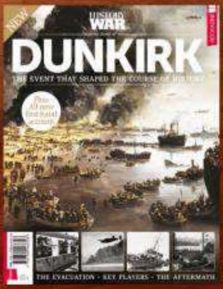
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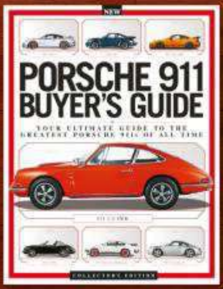
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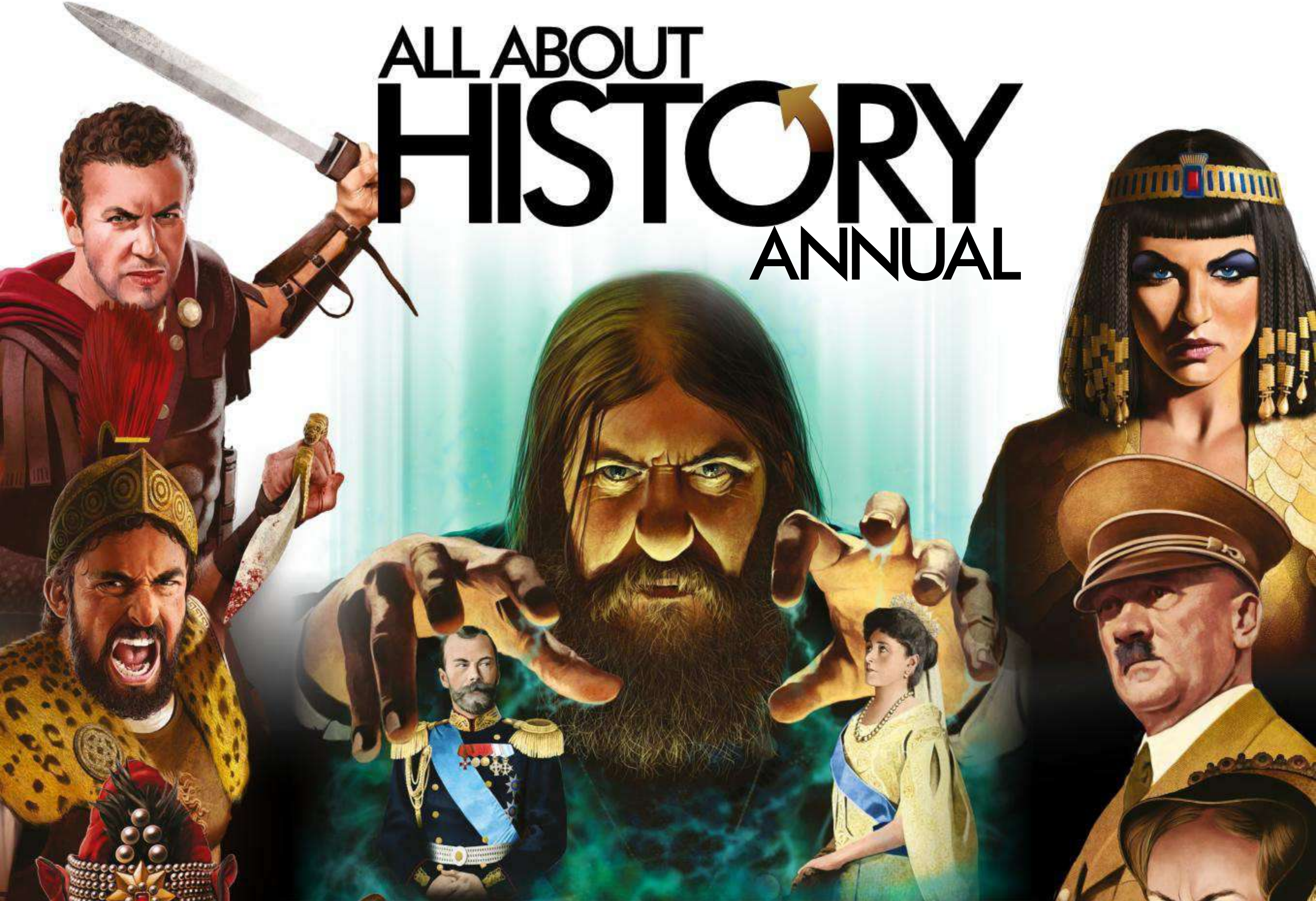

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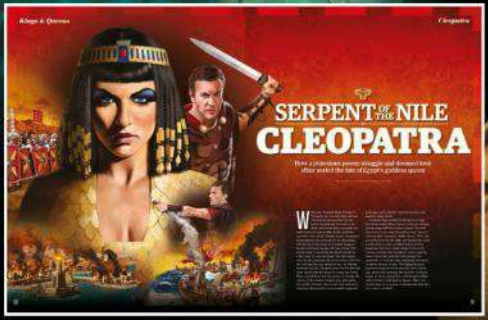

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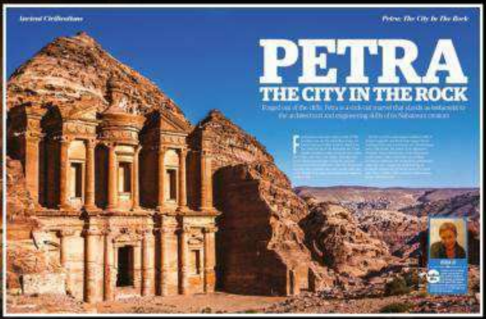

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